

MA Program in English

Handbook 2023-2024



Oregon State
University

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Mission Statement

The MA Program in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film trains its students to understand, appreciate, and critique the ways that language and culture shape our responses to the world beyond us. Balancing commitments to both scholarly rigor and academic outreach, the life of the mind and the practicalities of the job market, the program produces scholars skilled in the arts and sciences of communication, interpretation, pedagogy, and advocacy. In addition to these skills, the program also strives to promote a set of values crucial to leading meaningful, aesthetically engaged, and ethical lives.

Statement of Principles

The School of Writing, Literature, and Film affirms its commitment to supporting all students, including those who may face discrimination based on race, nationality, gender, sexuality, ability, religion, class, and immigration status. As scholars, writers, and filmmakers, we recognize the power of words and images to shape as well as challenge discourses that dehumanize minoritized populations. In the light of recent efforts to end DACA and to block immigration from Muslim-majority countries, as well as the resurgence of white supremacist movements in our community and around the US, the critical interrogation of such rhetoric and the material oppressions it produces matters more than ever. We remain committed to creating and maintaining inclusive and diverse spaces in which students can learn.

Learning Outcomes

University-wide Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLOs) for Master's Degree programs state the student shall:

- a) Conduct research or produce some other form of creative work;
- b) Demonstrate mastery of subject material;
- c) Conduct scholarly or professional activities in an ethical manner

Drawing upon the university-wide GLO language, the MA in English further specifies how these GLOs will be met in our program:

- 1) Demonstrate mastery of the discipline by detailing the development and current practices of literary studies, rhetoric, or film.
 - a) In the literature and film concentrations, the student's knowledge of the medium will be sufficient to allow that student to contextualize and judge contemporary literature or film in a long continuum (as would be expected, for instance, of an editor, producer, or publishing professional); to describe literature or film in terms of major periods, practices, and/or genres (as would be expected, for instance, of a community college instructor); and to evaluate the significance of individual works in their cultural and intellectual contexts (as would be expected, for instance, of an archivist, curator, or bibliographer)
 - b) In the rhetoric and writing concentration, the student's knowledge of the history, theory, and practice of the medium will be sufficient to allow that student to explain, evaluate, and practice divergent pedagogical methods (as would be expected, for instance, of a writing teacher); to describe rhetoric contextually and comparatively (as would be expected, for instance, of a rhetorical ethnographer); and/or to historicize and theorize emerging forms of composition and expression (as would be expected, for instance, of a professional in the ever-expanding world of digital communication).
- 2) Demonstrate mastery of the discipline by characterizing, instantiating, and critiquing the dominant critical theories, methodologies, and practices in the field. Mastery will be achieved and represented by the successful completion of ENG 514, Introduction to Graduate Studies, and, thereafter, by the inclusion of substantial critiques of the relevant scholarly literature in end-of-term essays and in the thesis.
- 3) Conduct research that leads to a substantial original thesis, written over the course of the second year, in a subfield of the student's choice. The thesis will be directed by a major professor in the subfield and additionally advised by two minor professors in related subfields.
- 4) Conduct research that engages and responds to diverse audiences of scholars, students, and community members. This will be demonstrated through the thesis defense; through presentations at professional conferences; through internships and independent studies; through the use of research on pedagogical approaches to writing/literature/film in university teaching assignments; and/or through intellectual events within the School (including the annual graduate student conference, seminar presentations, and scholarly talks).

- 5) Perform all activities in an ethical manner. This will be demonstrated at the disciplinary level by the student's ability, in coursework and in written essays, to recognize and to appropriately document the prior scholarly conversation informing any given line of research or argument; by the student's engagement, in coursework, with historically under- represented perspectives and a diverse canon of primary and secondary works in literature/writing/film; and by the use of unbiased language in written and oral scholarly conversation. Training in these areas will be provided by ENG 514, Intro to Grad Studies, by the varied research methods and subfields addressed in courses, and by a curriculum that includes historically marginalized works.

These programmatic GLOs contribute to OSU's three signature areas of distinction:

1. Advancing the Science of Sustainable Earth Ecosystems
2. Improving Human Health and Well Being
3. Promoting Economic Growth and Social Progress

Degree Requirements

For all MA students

One of the following must be designated Pre-1800

ENG 514: Introduction to Graduate Studies (4 credits)

MA Experience courses (16 credits)

MA Experience courses are designated in the course description. They are graduate-only seminars taught by SWLF faculty and should:

- Employ critical methodology(ies)
- Contribute to professional development
- Engage with current conversations in the field
- Ensure that primary and secondary sources offer a diversity of voices across race, ethnicity, gender, and other markers of identity and experience

Area of Concentration courses (12 credits)

“Area of Concentration” is defined as courses aligned with your degree track, i.e., Literature and Culture; Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture; or Film and Visual Culture

ENG 503: Thesis (12 credits)

One additional class as needed to get to 51 credits (GTAs) or 45 credits (Accelerated Master’s Program students)

For SWLF GTAs Only

WR 517: Teaching Practicum, English Composition (2 credits)

Pedagogy course (4 credits)

- Designated in course description

Additional Teaching Practicum (1-2 credits)

- Either ENG 507 (for Literature and Film students) or WR 519 (for Rhet/Comp students)
- Can take both if desired

Note: one class may fulfill more than one requirement, such as an MA Experience or Area of Concentration Class designated Pedagogy and/or Pre-1800

Additional Requirements

- Proficiency in a foreign language equivalent to a second-year university course (see OSU graduate catalog)
- Continuous enrollment (see OSU graduate catalog)

Thesis

There are two thesis options:

- 1) A single document of 40-60 pages, presenting a sustained argument and generally broken into closely related chapters or sections

OR

- 2) Two article-length essays developing arguments on distinct but related topics, each 20-25 pages, with a framing introduction that addresses their relationship. Digital projects can be understood as a variant on the two-article option, with one part fulfilled by a digital-first project and the other fulfilled by a written document related to that project; together, these items must present a sustained argument that situates the project within a body of scholarship.

Thesis Committees

Thesis committees, arranged by the end of the student's first year of study, include one major and two minor professors. Work on the thesis is directed principally by the student's major professor. All committee members must be members of the MA faculty or affiliate faculty members, with the major professor possessing significant expertise in the area of the student's thesis project. Other committee members' roles should be determined by the committee as a whole on a case-by-case basis; if a student chooses the second thesis option, for example, a committee member might oversee one essay while the major professor oversees the other essay and the framing introduction.

Oral Examination

A two-hour oral examination will be given in the student's final term of study. The first 15-25 minutes of the examination will be a public description of the project and a brief question and answer session. The remaining hour and a half will be a private examination carried out by the thesis committee and will measure a student's ability to carry out sustained research in his or her concentration. Students should submit the completed thesis in hard copy or electronically to their committees at least 2 weeks before their scheduled defense. Students are responsible for scheduling the defense room with assistance from the SWLF Office Specialist or Graduate Program Assistant.

Funding and Employment

To enable our School to fully fund our non-AMP students, the MA Program offers the following 2-year financial support package:

Internal Graduate Teaching Assistantships

All students admitted to the MA in English Program will automatically receive a standard Graduate Teaching Assistantship contract during their first year, which provides full tuition remission, 90% of health insurance for employees and their dependents, and a nine-month stipend cover living expenses as compensation for teaching a minimum of 3 classes, one per term, for SWLF. First-year GTAs will teach WR 121, OSU's first-year composition course.

All second-year students will be considered for internal GTAships similar in nature to the standard GTA contract in year one. These GTAships will include a suite of courses pertaining to their training and will be compensated with a nine-month stipend.

In both years, GTAs may be assigned a "special assignment" to make up the difference between their teaching hours (equal to .30 FTE) and their total hours (minimum .40 FTE per term in AY 23-24).

All GTA appointments are conducted under the Coalition of Graduate Employee's [bargaining agreement](#).

External GTAships

Students may also be considered for external GTA and GRA positions in academic and professional units beyond the School of Writing, Literature, and Film. These positions provide full tuition remission, health insurance, and salary.

Travel Funds

Travel funds of \$500 per student are available to all students who are presenting at an academic conference in their second year. The MA Director will notify all students via email when other opportunities for funding arise.

Grad Student Professional Development Expenses

Please follow the steps below to use your professional development funds for conference travel.

Step one: Contact Amanda Bressler to request a cash advance. In your email, please explain how this travel is connected to your teaching (e.g., how will the conference develop your creative writing / literary analysis / composition skills in order to teach XX class or deliver specific lesson plans). Additionally, provide the location you are traveling to, your departure and return dates, and an estimate of expenses.

Step two: Add Amanda as a delegate in Concur (OSU's travel and reimbursement system) by following these steps:

1. Concur login: <https://www.concursolutions.com/home.asp>
2. Profile update: https://media.oregonstate.edu/media/t/1_1948f00e
3. Add Amanda as a delegate: https://media.oregonstate.edu/media/t/1_1o4gm9f9

Amanda will then request a cash advance of \$500 in professional development funds to use on approved purchases such as conference registration, airfare or other travel, lodging, or meals during the trip. A check will be mailed to your current mailing address on file with OSU. These funds are available one time during your degree.

Step three: Before your trip, please send Amanda a copy of your travel itinerary and any receipts (registration, airfare, lodging), up to \$500.

Step four: After the trip, if you haven't yet claimed your full \$500, send any remaining receipts to Amanda. Please note: even though you received a cash advance, *receipts are essential for bookkeeping and must still be submitted*. You can review OSU's full travel policy here: [FIS Travel Policy](#)

FAQ:

Q: What if I plan to attend a conference and spend the \$500 but end up not going?

A: If travel cannot be completed for any reason, you will have to reimburse OSU the \$500 cash advance. This can be done by making a check out to OSU for the full amount and bringing it to Amanda for processing.

Q: What kinds of expenses count as professional development?

A: Conference travel is the primary professional development expense for SWLF grad students. If you have any other proposed uses, please contact the MA / MFA Director before requesting the funds from the Assistant to the Director.

Q: What conference travel expenses can be reimbursed?

A: Typical travel expenses include conference registration, transportation, lodging, and meals. More details on the OSU policy are available [here](#).

Two-Year Schedule

Year One

Summer

- Sign up for ONID account
- Join MA Working Group (MAWG) listserv
- Register for classes
- Contact MA Ambassadors for housing assistance

Fall

- Attend Orientation
- Take ENG 514 “Intro to Graduate Studies”
- Attend Critical Questions (CQ) opening lecture
- Determine language requirement plan

Winter

- Take ENG 507 or WR 599: Practicum
- Begin discussions with potential thesis committee members
- Begin to check UPenn CFP Site for potential conferences
- Submit to spring MA Symposium
- Submit thesis committee preference form to Graduate Director
- Attend CQ talk (s)

Spring

- Weeks 1-2: schedule first meeting with Primary Advisor to discuss prospectus
- Schedule Committee prospectus meeting by the end of spring term
- Attend MA Symposium
- Attend CQ talk(s)
- Check for conference CFPs and draft proposals
- May 1: Deadline to opt out of summer insurance if you do not want it (premiums will be refunded)

<https://hr.oregonstate.edu/graduate-student-insurance-plans>

Year Two

Fall

- Join thesis writing group
- Attend CQ talk
- Complete Program of Study form
- Meet with MA Director to discuss thesis progress and career preparation
- Seek out relevant volunteer opportunities
- Apply for Graduate Council Representative (GCR) for thesis defense
- Complete draft of first chapter or article of thesis
- Determine language requirement plan
- Apply for SWLF internships as relevant

Winter

- Submit Program of Study form to Graduate School
- Complete draft of Chapter II (or Second Article) of thesis
- Volunteer as MA Ambassador for accepted MA students
- Begin job search: visit Career Center and begin revising CV / resume
- Attend CQ talk(s) as available
- Ensure foreign language requirement has been / will be fulfilled

Spring

- Schedule thesis defense date and room
- Complete thesis and defend
- Continue job search
- Attend CQ talk
- Attend MA Symposium
- Complete [all steps for Master's degree completion](#)

Checklist for spring graduation

For more guidance, see the Graduate School's official [list for graduating Master's students](#)

Heading into spring term, make sure that you:

- Submit your [Program of Study](#) at least 15 weeks before desired defense date
- Have a [Graduate Council Representative or GCR](#) lined up
- Reserve a room for your thesis defense; call Molly McFerran
- [Documented](#) your foreign language proficiency
- File a [diploma application](#) by April 2

Two Weeks Before Your Defense:

- Schedule your defense using the [online form](#)
- Distribute copies of your thesis to your committee

Before your thesis defense:

- Prepare your presentation
- Prepare pretext pages using the Graduate School's [Thesis Guide](#)
- For a Spring 2024 graduation, you must defend, revise, and upload the final thesis document to ScholarsArchive by June 14, 2024.

Moreland Main Office Contacts

Amanda Bressler - Assistant to the Director

Moreland 240C

amanda.bressler@oregonstate.edu

541-737-1667

- Payroll, GTA teaching schedules and classroom assignments, travel, reimbursements/financial questions, Canvas access.

Molly McFerran - Office Specialist II/Graduate Program Assistant

238 Moreland Hall

molly.mcferran@oregonstate.edu

541-737-1635

- Office assignments/keys, class cancellations/location changes, student evaluations, conference room/thesis defense location reservations, copier codes/issues, building maintenance requests, textbooks/desk copies, office supply orders, equipment circulation, office hours, phones, grade back-ups and mail.

Classroom Technology

Services LINC 466

Use this link to [submit a help request](#) or call 541-737-2121

- Help with instructional and presentation technology in classrooms.

UIT (University Information and Technology) Service

Desk 201 Milne Hall

Use this link to [submit a help request](#) or call 541-737-8787

- Computer/Technical Issues

Grievance Policies

An important goal of Oregon State University is to maintain harmonious relations among students, faculty, and staff. To this end, candid and informal discussions between graduate students and others in the University are encouraged as a means of achieving harmony and of arriving at mutually satisfactory solutions to graduate student problems. Graduate education is based upon a mutuality of interests and respect among faculty and students. It is important that this mutual concern for the quality of education and the persons involved be fostered and preserved.

If the informal discussions of a grievance between a graduate student and his or her supervisor break down, the use of or participation in a grievance procedure shall not subject the graduate student, any witness, or any graduate student's representative to reprisal in any way by the supervisor, the department, the major professor, the student's graduate committee, or the University. Nor shall participation in the grievance procedure be reflected in any way in efficiency ratings, grades, evaluations, promotion opportunities, or graduate student employment relations.

More information available on OSU's [Graduate School Grievance Policies site](#).

Graduate Course Designations and Appeal Process

Course designations (MA Experience, pedagogy, pre-1800 etc.) are made by the faculty. Any decision to take a course outside of SWLF should be made in conversation with the MA Director.

The MA Director is the first point of contact for petitions on curricular matters. If a student wishes to appeal the MA Director's decision, they can do so with the MA Committee, which is comprised of SWLF faculty and appointed each year by the SWLF Director. The MA Director will put the student in touch with the committee and will provide a statement explaining the decision but will not participate in the committee's decision-making process.

Graduate Student Advisory Committee – Student representation

The Graduate Student Advisory Committee is staffed with two first-year students (one in the MA program and one in the MFA program) and two second-year students (one in the MA program and one in the MFA program). Inaugurated in Fall 2020, it will serve as an independent voice for graduate students. The committee meets each term with SWLF leadership about graduate student concerns. Elections for representatives will be held in the fall of each year.

Reporting Sexual Misconduct

SWLF expects an environment free from discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, bullying, retaliation, and other forms of intimidation or misuse of power. SWLF recognizes that actions that threaten this climate may involve individuals in any position within SWLF.

As a graduate employee, an undergraduate may approach you with concerns about the classroom climate or to report their experience outside the classroom. Depending on the kind of concerns being reported, there are links below for next steps to take. In all cases, it is appropriate to contact a faculty member or SWLF administrator for guidance in taking these next steps. In some cases, graduate employees may be required to report concerns to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access (EOA).

As a graduate student, you may wish to approach a faculty member or administrator to report an experience of misuse of power or to get help resolving classroom climate issues. Depending on the situation, you may also report directly to EOA, to the Bias Response Team, to Student Conduct and Community Standards, and/or to our SWLF graduate representatives.

Sexual Misconduct

All individuals who are participating in university programs and activities have the right to do so fully, free from sexual discrimination, misconduct, and retaliation. The university prohibits sexual/gender-based discrimination and sexual misconduct of any kind. Sexual/gender-based discrimination can include discrimination based on sex, gender, gender identity (including transgender), gender expression, or sexual orientation. Sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, non-consensual sexual intercourse, non-consensual sexual activity, intimate partner violence, stalking and sexual exploitation are considered sexual misconduct and are prohibited. Such misconduct violates university policy and may violate state or federal law. When such misconduct occurs, the university will take steps to stop, prevent recurrence, and remedy the impacts of such behavior.

Under OSU's Responsible Employee policy, any employee receiving information that indicates sexual misconduct or discrimination has occurred is required to immediately report it to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access. The full Responsible Employee policy, including a link for reporting and FAQs, can be found here: [https:// eoa.oregonstate.edu/responsible-employee-policy](https://eoa.oregonstate.edu/responsible-employee-policy)

Concerns involving sexual misconduct can be directly reported to EOA via this link: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?OregonStateUniv&layout_id=2

Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination, or Retaliation

Concerns that do not appear to involve sexual misconduct can also be reported to EOA by the impacted person when that person feels that harassment, bullying, discrimination, or retaliation has occurred. If a student approaches you, as a graduate instructor, with such a complaint, directing them to EOA is always a good course of action. The reporting form, which is the same for members of the University community in all roles, can be found here: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?OregonStateUniv&layout_id=4

Bias

When any member of the University community believes that a bias incident has occurred, reports (anonymous or signed) may be sent to the University's Bias Response Team. This may be done separately from, or in tandem with, the above actions, as circumstances suggest. The Bias Response Team performs assessment and takes action per the protocols detailed here, and may

suggest that the impacted person file one of the reports described above. The Bias Incident Report Form may be found here: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?OregonStateUniv&layout_id=10

Reporting Links

A useful website containing all the reporting forms and channels detailed above may be found here: [https:// studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/reporting](https://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/reporting)

Important Links

OSU SWLF MA Page

<http://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/wlf/ma>

OSU Graduate School

<https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/>

Cultural Resource Centers at Oregon State

<https://dce.oregonstate.edu/cultural-resource-centers>

Graduate Assistant Insurance Plan

<https://hr.oregonstate.edu/graduate-student-insurance-plans>

Counseling and Psychological Services

<http://counseling.oregonstate.edu/>

OSU Jobs

<https://jobs.oregonstate.edu/>

Higher Ed Jobs

<https://www.higheredjobs.com/default.cfm>

Chronicle of Higher Education

<https://www.chronicle.com/>

Calls for Papers

<https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/>

Oregon Department of Transportation

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Pages/index.aspx>

City of Corvallis

<https://www.corvallisoregon.gov/>