English

We study how literature works, how we understand it, and how we write about it. We examine closely matters of language, form, genre, and critical method. We invite you to new practices of reading and writing that promote the understanding of literatures and cultures in English through history, criticism, and theory. We are committed to the understanding of literature from a transnational perspective, emphasizing the movement of texts and peoples across borders of nation, race, gender, and sexuality, now and in the past. And we encourage students to commit themselves to the creation of original knowledge in their reading and writing.

In addition to the English concentration, we offer an English concentration track in the practice of Nonfiction Writing. The concentration in English and the English/Nonfiction track follow the same core requirements, and students in the English concentration may elect Nonfiction Writing courses as electives. We invite applications from qualified juniors to the honors programs in both English and Nonfiction. One of the largest humanities concentrations at Brown, English provides a strong foundation for a liberal education and for work in many sectors of employment, especially in the many areas where new media creates demand for transformative writing: the press, publishing, advertising, visual media, public relations, public service, teaching, finance, government, corporate research and administration. English concentrators routinely go on to law, medical, and professional schools as well as to graduate education in literature and the arts.

About the Concentration

We encourage students interested in concentrating in English to come into the department offices at 70 Brown Street and speak with a concentration advisor. Students in English courses who are considering an English concentration are welcome to make an appointment to speak with their instructor. Concentration programs must be approved by a concentration advisor. To declare a concentration, students must fill out an online Concentration form via ASK and enter their plan of study indicating the requirements that each course fulfills.

Concentration Requirements (10 courses):

1. ONE "How Literature Matters" course (ENGL0100): 1
   - ENGL 0100D Matters of Romance
   - ENGL 0100F Devils, Demons, and Do Gooders
   - ENGL 0100G The Literature of Identity
   - ENGL 0100P Love Stories
   - ENGL 0100R American Histories, American Novels
   - ENGL 0100S Being Romantic
   - ENGL 0100T The Simple Art of Murder
   - ENGL 0100U Serial Fictions
   - ENGL 0100V Inventing Asian American Literature

2. ONE course before 1700: 1
   - These are courses that focus on the early modern period, i.e., medieval and renaissance literatures.

3. ONE course after 1700: 1
   - These are courses that focus on the 18th-century and beyond.

4. ONE course in "Literature Across Borders": 1
   - ENGL 0100G The Literature of Identity
   - ENGL 0100V Inventing Asian American Literature
   - ENGL 0150U The Terrible Century
   - ENGL 0150X The Claims of Fiction
   - ENGL 0510Q Unstable Subjects: Race and Meaning in Contemporary (African) American Literature
   - ENGL 0700S American Literature and Political Radicalism
   - ENGL 0710B African American Literature and the Legacy of Slavery
   - ENGL 0710E Postcolonial Tales of Transition

5. ONE theory course: 1

6. FIVE electives 2

Total Credits 10

1 Each course may fulfill ONE requirement. Five courses must be 1000-level courses. With advisor approval, two of the ten required courses may be taken in departments other than English.
2 Only TWO courses dealing primarily with the practice of writing at the 1000-level may be counted as electives. One ENGL0200 may be counted toward the 10-course requirement only as an elective.

All substitutions and/or exceptions must be approved by the concentration advisor in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies. A substitution or exception is not approved until specified in writing in the student’s concentration file housed in the English Department.

English Concentration -- Nonfiction Writing Track (10 courses)

The English concentration also includes a Nonfiction Writing Track. The requirements are the same as 1 through 6 above, but three of the five electives must be 1000-level Nonfiction Writing courses (only ONE of which may be intermediate). Only THREE Nonfiction courses may count toward the concentration.

Honors in English

The English Honors program is intended for students who have been highly successful in their English concentration coursework and who want the opportunity to pursue a research project in more depth than is possible in an undergraduate seminar. The program is intended for those students with a strong desire to conduct independent research under the supervision of a thesis advisor and culminates in the writing of a thesis during the senior year.

Admission

Students apply to the Honors Program early in the second semester of their junior year. Interested concentrators are encouraged to speak to the Honors Advisor early in their junior year to discuss their plans. Specific deadlines for admission are announced annually and are available in the department office. Students who are studying off campus are expected to meet the application submission deadline.

Admission to the English Honors Program depends on evidence of ability and promise in the study of literature. To be eligible for admission, students must have received more As than Bs (and no Cs or below) in concentration courses completed. Students must complete an application; supply a brief writing sample, and request two letters of recommendation from English faculty with whom they have taken courses. If necessary, letters may come from faculty in related departments. Letters from teaching assistants may only serve as supporting recommendations. Candidates must also submit a one-page project proposal signed by the faculty member who has agreed to serve as the thesis advisor. See procedures and application (http://brown.edu/academics/english/english-honors-procedures) for more details.

Requirements
The course requirements for the English Honors Program are the same as those for the regular concentration, with the following additions:

As part of regular coursework, and counting toward the concentration requirements, honors candidates must complete at least three upper-level seminars or comparable small courses in which students have the opportunity to do independent research, take significant responsibility for discussion, and do extensive scholarly and critical writing. Students are encouraged to include at least one graduate seminar in their program. (Permission to take a graduate course must be obtained from the instructor.) Honors candidates should discuss their proposed course of study with the Honors Advisor.

During the Fall and Spring of the senior year, honors candidates must complete two additional courses beyond the ten courses required by the regular concentration: ENGL 1991 and ENGL 1992. ENGL 1991 is the Senior Honors Seminar, in which students begin to research and write their theses, as well as meet to discuss their work. This is a mandatory S/NC course. ENGL 1992, the Senior Honors Thesis is an independent research course that must be taken for a grade.

December graduates take the following sequence of additional thesis courses instead:

In the 7th semester (Spring), students must take one of the following courses, within which they begin to research and write their theses:

--An Independent Study with their thesis advisor

--or ENGL 1140A: The Literary Scholar

Either course must be taken S/NC. In the 8th semester (Fall), students must take ENGL 1992 for a grade, as they complete their theses.

Half-year graduates should consult with the Honors Advisor for information about deadlines.

Honors candidates must continue to receive more As than Bs in courses taken as part of the concentration. Courses completed with a grade of C will not count toward an Honors concentration. A student who receives such a grade and wishes to continue in the program must complete a comparable course with a grade higher than C.

The Honors Thesis

The Honors thesis is an extended essay, usually between 50 and 80 pages, written under the supervision of a department faculty advisor and the student's second reader. (Where appropriate, the advisor or the reader, but not both, may be in another department.) The thesis may be an interdisciplinary or creative project, but it is usually an essay on a scholarly or critical problem dealing with works of literature in English. The specific topic and approach of the thesis are worked out between the student and the thesis advisor, with assistance from the student's second reader. This process should begin in the latter part of the student's junior year. A good way to get an idea of what sorts of projects are possible is to visit the Hay Library, which stores theses from previous years, or to meet with the Honors Advisor. The work typically is in a genre chosen from Nonfiction Writing's spectrum: critical analysis, literary journalism, memoir, lyric essay, or narrative based on travel, science, history, or cultural critique.

Full thesis drafts are due by mid-March; final bound copies of the thesis are due in mid-April. Late theses will not be accepted for honors after the April deadline; students who hand in theses after the deadline but before the end of the term will receive a grade for the thesis course, but they will not be eligible for departmental honors. The completed thesis will be evaluated by the student’s advisor and a second reader, each of whom provides written commentary and suggests a grade for ENGL 1992.

Evaluation

The English Department reviews the academic record as well as the thesis evaluations for each senior completing the Honors Program. Following a successful review, the student will be eligible to graduate with Honors in English.

Honors in Nonfiction Writing

The Nonfiction Writing Honors Program is intended for students who have been highly successful in their English concentration work. Specifically, it allows those who have an expressed and proven interest in nonfiction writing to pursue more completely a single project under the supervision of a first reader. The intention is to help students to complete work worthy of publication. The program culminates in the writing of a thesis during the senior year.

Admission

Students apply to the Nonfiction Writing Honors Program in the second semester of their junior year. Interested students should already have made contact with at least one member of the Nonfiction Writing faculty and should meet with the Honors Advisor to discuss their proposed project. Admission to the Honors Program in Nonfiction Writing depends upon a student's demonstrated superior ability in nonfiction writing. Students must have taken either one intermediate and one advanced writing course, or two advanced writing courses by the end of their sixth semester and completed each of them with an S. To be eligible for admission, students must have earned more As than Bs (and no Cs or below) in other courses in the concentration plan. See procedures and application (http://brown.edu/academics/english/nonfiction-honors-procedures) for more details.

Requirements

Students in the Nonfiction Writing Honors Program take two additional courses beyond the ten courses required by the Nonfiction Writing Track -- ENGL 1993 Honors Seminar in Nonfiction Writing (with the Honors Advisor) and ENGL 1994 Senior Honors Thesis in Nonfiction Writing; the Honors track will bring to twelve the total number of required courses. The ENGL 1993 grade option must be S/NC; ENGL 1994 must be taken for a grade. Honors candidates should discuss their proposed course of study with the faculty member they choose to direct their thesis.

Honors candidates must continue to receive more As than Bs in courses taken as part of the concentration. Courses completed with a grade of C will not count toward an Honors concentration. A student who receives a "C" after admission to Nonfiction Honors and wishes to continue in the program must complete an additional course in a comparable subject area, with a grade higher than C.

The Honors Thesis

The Nonfiction Writing Honors thesis is an extended project, usually of between 50 and 80 pages, written under the supervision of one of the Nonfiction Writing faculty and a second reader (who can be from literature or another department). The specific topic and approach of the thesis are worked out between the student and the first reader, with assistance from the student's second reader. A good way to get an idea of what sorts of projects are possible is to visit the Hay Library, which stores theses from previous years, or to meet with the Honors Advisor. The work typically is in a genre chosen from Nonfiction Writing's spectrum: critical analysis, literary journalism, memoir, lyric essay, or narrative based on travel, science, history, or cultural critique.

Full thesis drafts are due by mid-March; final bound copies of the thesis are due in mid-April. Late theses will not be accepted for honors after the April deadline; students who hand in theses after the deadline and before the end of the term will receive a grade for the thesis course, but they will not be eligible for departmental honors. The completed thesis will be evaluated by its first reader and second reader, each of whom provides written commentary and suggests a grade for ENGL 1994. Half-year graduates will take ENGL 1200 in the spring of their final year and ENGL 1994 in the fall. (Half-year graduates should consult with the Honors Advisor for information on deadlines.)

Evaluation

The English Department reviews the academic record as well as the thesis evaluations for each senior completing the Nonfiction Writing Honors Program. Following a successful review, the student will be eligible to graduate with Honors in Nonfiction Writing.