

ENGLISH: 20TH/21ST CENTURIES, BA

When we study the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries we turn the present into history. All the more ironic, then, that the period opened with the injunction to “MAKE IT NEW,” to break away from tradition into a pure, laboratory world of aesthetic experiment. This “modernist revolution” was played out against calamities: a worldwide war, accelerating technological upheaval, economic depression, existential despair. Thus, James Joyce’s refashioning of English conveyed the heartbreak of love and loss; Gertrude Stein pushed language to the condition of paint to express confusions in gender and national identity; Hemingway pared down prose to monosyllables to make fiction writing an ethical act. The world was a “Waste Land” – T. S. Eliot’s “heap of broken images” – and literature not only told this story but enacted it. Ugly, hermetic, elitist: it was so brilliant! As the century proceeded, the disasters piled up – another world war, the Holocaust, Vietnam, such rapid shifts in technology and communication that no one could hope to adjust. And suddenly there were new voices to hear, voices whose stories had so far remained untold. By the 1970s, unprecedented quantities of literature by women and minorities were appearing in print. The wild energy of aesthetic experiment had been tethered to the project of social change, and in imaginations as rich as Toni Morrison’s the triumph of art is no longer a betrayal of the human condition. This is the history we study as we continue to deal with the fallout of the twentieth century and explore our brave new millennium.

The minimum total course units (<https://www.college.upenn.edu/credits-needed-major/>) for graduation in this major is 33. Double majors may entail more course units.

For more information: <http://www.english.upenn.edu/Undergrad/>

For information about the General Education requirements, please visit the College of Arts & Sciences Curriculum (<https://www.college.upenn.edu/curriculum/>) page.

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Code	Title	Course Units
College General Education Requirements and Free Electives		
Foundational Approaches + Sectors + Free Electives		20
Major Requirements		
<i>Core Requirement</i> ¹		
Select one course in each sector from ENGL 0010-ENGL 5999, except ENGL 3000-3999:		6
Sector 1 - Theory & Poetics (Attribute AETP)		
Sector 2 - Difference and Diaspora (Attribute: AEDD)		
Sector 3 - Medieval/Renaissance (Attribute: AEMR)		
Sector 4 - Literature of the Long 18th Century (Attribute: AE18)		
Sector 5 - 19th Century Literature (Attribute: AE19)		
Sector 6 - 20th-21st Century Literature (Attribute: AE20)		
<i>The One Series (TOS)</i> ²		
ENGL 4500-4998		1

<i>Early-Period Seminars</i> ³	
ENGL 0300-0399; 0500:0599; 0700-0799; 2000-2999; 4500-4998; 5000-5999	2
Seminar 1: Literature Before 1700 (Attribute AEB7)	
Seminar 2: Literature Before 1900 (Attribute: AEB7, AEB9)	
<i>Literature Seminar Electives</i> ⁴	
ENGL 0051; 0300-0399; 0500-0599; 0700-0799; 2000-2999; 3000-3999; 4000-4998; 5000-5999	2
Seminar 3: Any Literature Seminar	
Seminar 4: Any Literature Seminar	
<i>Electives</i> ⁵	
ENGL 0010-ENGL 5999	2-4
<i>Concentration Requirements</i> ⁶	
Four courses ENGL 0010-5999 with attribute AE20 and/or AE21	
Total Course Units	33

1

You will need to take one course to fulfill each sector of the Major Core, six in total. Two of these courses may double-count with your Literature Seminar Electives. Creative Writing Seminars cannot count in the Major Core.

2

The One Series seminar (TOS) cannot double-count in the Major Core. However, if you take a second TOS course, your additional TOS may count as a Literature Seminar or an Elective.

3

These Early-Period Seminars may NOT double-count in the Core.

4

These Seminar Electives may be double-counted in the Core.

5

The rest of your 13 c.u. for the English Major will be met with Electives. If none of your seminars are being double-counted in the Core, you will only need two Electives. For each double-counting course, you will need to add an Elective, for a maximum of four, to reach 13 c.u. With the approval of your Major Advisor, you may count up to two courses outside of English toward the Major. Courses in Linguistics (LING) and in Literatures not in English may count; in the case of Non-English Literatures, the courses should ideally be crosslisted (“Also offered As”) with ENGL, or you may obtain the permission from your Major advisor.

6

Concentration may be comprised from the 13 c.u. of the Major, or other courses.

Honors

Applicants must have a 3.6 GPA in the major. Thesis required.

The degree and major requirements displayed are intended as a guide for students entering in the Fall of 2023 and later. Students should consult with their academic program regarding final certifications and requirements for graduation.