

# ENGLISH, B.A. (ALTOONA)

**Begin Campus:** Any Penn State Campus

**End Campus:** Altoona

## Program Description

Majors explore the imaginative and practical uses of English through courses in literature, writing, rhetoric, and language. They develop perspectives on human nature and cultural values through American, British, and other English literatures; they learn how to gather, analyze, synthesize, and communicate information; they gain mastery over their language. These skills help English majors find careers in such fields as publishing, business, industry, government, and teaching. English majors often go on to postgraduate study not only in English but in such areas as law, business, education, or other liberal disciplines.

Majors can emphasize writing, literature, or rhetoric, or a mix of literature, writing, and rhetoric. All provide a liberal education and all develop analytic and writing skills. Qualified students may participate in the career internship and in the English honors program.

Students interested in earning certification in secondary education should contact the College of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction. (See also Teacher Education Programs (<https://ed.psu.edu/academics/teacher-testing-certification/>)).

## Traditions of Innovation Option

**Available at the following campuses:** Brandywine, Scranton, University Park

This option allows students to explore the imaginative and practical uses of English language through a variety of courses in literature, writing, and rhetoric across historical periods. The flexibility of the English curriculum allows students to focus in literary and cultural studies, creative writing, professional and media writing, and/or rhetoric, according to individual interests and goals. In the process, students learn to gather, analyze, synthesize, and communicate information as they improve their language skills across diverse creative and critical scenarios. These skills prepare students for careers in a wide range of professional fields.

## Writing and Literature in Context Option

**Available at the following campuses:** Abington, Altoona, Brandywine, Scranton, York

This option focuses on English as a foundation for strong critical thinking and distinctive communication skills, imaginative approaches to problem solving, and collaboration with aligned fields. The flexibility of the major allows students to study literature, creative writing, theatre, media studies, professional writing, and/or other disciplines, according to their individual interests and goals. These foundations prepare English majors for careers in a wide range of professional fields.

## What is English?

English refers to a broad field of study related to literature, professional writing, creative writing, and rhetoric. Majors develop critical thinking skills and produce influential academic, creative, professional, and digital texts. They learn to analyze genres, texts, and contexts that involve, for instance, race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality. They also learn how various texts communicate value, meaning, and social and cultural critique.

## You Might Like This Program If...

- You enjoy writing in different genres, styles, and media, e.g. videos, print or web magazine articles, critical essays, reviews, short stories, poems, etc.
- You enjoy addressing social justice issues that give context to texts.
- You want to use communication to help solve problems involving science, technology, medicine, law, business, or society.
- You enjoy making connections between historical eras and current realities.
- You want to a career in law, non-profit work, medicine, education, or writing/editing.

## Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have at least third-semester classification (<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm>).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/>)

## Degree Requirements

**For the Bachelor of Arts degree in English, a minimum of 123 credits is required:**

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	18
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	36

**3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if world language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.**

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

## Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

## Common Requirements for the Major (All Options)

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
ENGL 200	Introduction to Critical Reading	3
or ENGL 201	What is Literature	

ENGL 494H	Senior Thesis in English	3
or ENGL 487W	Senior Seminar	

Supporting Courses and Related Areas

Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better

In consultation with adviser, select 18 credits in literature, writing, or rhetoric. At least 9 credits must be at the 300/400 level. At least 3 of the 300/400 level credits must fulfill a departmental diversity requirement for a course related to race, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, and/or postcolonial issues.

Requirements for the Option

Requirements for the Option: Require a grade of C or better

Select an option 12

Requirements for the Option

Traditions of Innovation Option (12 Credits)

Available at the following campuses: Brandywine, Scranton, University Park

Code	Title	Credits
Additional Courses		
Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better		
Select 3 credits of 300/400 level course in each of the following areas:		12
	Medieval through Sixteenth Century	
	Sixteenth Century through Eighteenth Century	
	The Nineteenth Century	
	Twentieth Century to the Present	

Writing and Literature in Context Option (12 Credits)

Available at the following campuses: Abington, Altoona, Brandywine, Scranton, York

Code	Title	Credits
Additional Courses		
Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better		
Select 3 credits of 400-level pre-1800 courses		3
Select 3 credits of 400-level post-1800 courses		3
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		
Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better		
Select 6 credits of English courses at any level		6

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- Quantification (GQ): 6 credits
- Writing and Speaking (GWS): 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- Arts (GA): 3 credits
- Health and Wellness (GHW): 3 credits
- Humanities (GH): 3 credits
- Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS): 3 credits
- Natural Sciences (GN): 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain): 6 credits

Exploration

- GN, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses. This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or

within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

## B.A. Degree Requirements

**World Language** (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

**B.A. Fields** (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

**World Cultures** (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

## Program Learning Objectives

- Apply critical, theoretical, and/or disciplinary approaches to the reading and analysis of texts in multiple genres and/or media.
- Analyze the aesthetic and/or cultural significance of the ideas, values, conventions, forms, and genres associated with texts.
- Gather, evaluate, and employ an array of research materials in support of critical studies, and/or creative activity, in ways consistent with standards of academic integrity.
- Demonstrate writing and rhetorical skills appropriate to critical and/or creative tasks in a variety of media and genres.
- Analyze representative literary, theoretical, and cultural texts within significant historical, geographical, and cultural contexts.

## Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

## Altoona

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## University Park

**Liberal Arts Academic Advising**

814-865-2545  
Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (<https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/>) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

## York

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## Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2025-26 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

## Writing and Literature in Context Option: English, B.A. at Altoona Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If**

report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

### First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 15, 30H, or ESL 15 <sup>†</sup>	3 English Literature, Writing, or Rhetoric Course <sup>*</sup>	3
PSU 3	1 CAS 100 <sup>††</sup>	3
General Education Course <sup>†</sup>	3 General Education Course <sup>†</sup>	3
World Language Course Level 1	4 World Language Course Level 2	4
General Education Course (GQ) <sup>††</sup>	3 General Education Course <sup>†</sup>	3
Elective	3	
	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>

### Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
General Education Course <sup>†</sup>	3 English Literature, Writing, or Rhetoric Course <sup>*</sup>	3
ENGL 200 or 201 <sup>*</sup>	3 Elective	3
English literature, writing, or rhetoric <sup>*</sup>	3 General Education Course <sup>†</sup>	3
World Language Course Level 3	4 General Education Course <sup>†</sup>	3
General Education Course (GQ) <sup>††</sup>	3 B.A. Requirement	3
	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

### Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
English Literature, Writing, or Rhetoric Course <sup>*</sup>	3 English 400-level Period Course <sup>*</sup>	3
English 400-Level Period Course <sup>*</sup>	3 English Literature, Writing, or Rhetoric Course <sup>*</sup>	3
General Education Course	3 ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D <sup>‡</sup>	3
B.A. Requirement	3 General Education Course <sup>††</sup>	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

### Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 400-level Period Course <sup>*</sup>	3 ENGL 400-level Period Course <sup>*</sup>	3
English Literature, Writing, or Rhetoric <sup>*</sup>	3 Elective	3
World Cultures Course	3 General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
B.A. Requirement	3 Elective	3
General Education Course (GHW)	1.5 Elective	3
ENGL 487W <sup>*</sup>	3	
	<b>16.5</b>	<b>13.5</b>

**Total Credits 124**

\* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

# Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

### University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

### Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

## Career Paths

### Careers

Our graduates use their training in careers as attorneys, publishers, professional writers, editors, public relations directors, non-profit professionals, foreign service specialists, entrepreneurs, teachers, and education professionals.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE ENGLISH PROGRAM (<https://english.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/career-enrichment-network/>)

### Opportunities for Graduate Studies

English majors often go on to postgraduate study not only in English but in areas such as law, medicine, business, education, or liberal arts disciplines.

More information about opportunities for graduate studies can be found through the following websites:

- Association of Departments of English (<https://www.maps.mla.org/About-MAPS/ADE/>)
- Law School Admissions Council (<https://www.lsac.org/>)
- Association of American Medical Colleges (<https://www.aamc.org/>)
- AWP Guide to Writing Programs ([https://www.awpwriter.org/guide/guide\\_writing\\_programs/](https://www.awpwriter.org/guide/guide_writing_programs/))

## Professional Resources

- Department Website with information on Major, Minor, concentrations, and other opportunities (<https://english.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/majors/>)
- Kalliope, Penn State's undergraduate literary magazine (<https://kalliope.psu.edu/>)
- Creative Writing Club, A community for improving and sharing creative writing (<https://sites.psu.edu/creativewritingclub/>)
- W.O.R.D.S., Writers Organized to Represent Diverse Stories
- Career Enrichment Network, resource for career-related, international, and professional development (<https://la.psu.edu/current-students/career-enrichment-network/>)
- Modern Language Association, Guide for Undergraduate Research (<https://www.mla.org>)
- Conference on College Composition and Communication (<https://cccc.ncte.org/>)
- National Council of Teachers of English (<https://ncte.org/>)
- American Bar Association (<https://www.americanbar.org>)
- AWP
- American Society of Journalists and Authors (<https://www.asja.org/>)
- National Association of Science Writers (<https://www.nasw.org/>)
- Society for Technical Communication (<https://www.stc.org/>)
- Society of Professional Journalists (<https://www.spj.org/>)
- Association of Writers and Writing Programs (<https://www.awpwriter.org/>)
- American Grant Writers' Association (<http://www.agwa.us/>)
- International Writing Centers Association (<https://writingcenters.org/>)
- TESOL International Association (<https://www.tesol.org/>)

## Contact

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