

WRITING AND DIGITAL MEDIA, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: Berks

Program Description

The major is intended to prepare students to write effectively in a variety of workplace and academic settings. Methods of instruction draw upon the strategies and techniques of practicing writers outside of the University, including workshops, peer conferencing, collaborative writing, portfolio preparation, and internships. At the same time, theory courses provide the necessary background to help students understand and appreciate the larger issues surrounding the writing and reading of texts.

As a liberal arts degree, the Writing and Digital Media major is appropriate for students who wish to develop a set of applied communication skills to prepare for a wide range of professional positions or for graduate or professional schools. The degree differs from most current English majors in at least three ways:

1. a practical orientation prepares graduates for employment, in addition to post-graduate English studies;
2. a multidisciplinary focus integrates courses from the liberal arts, business, and information technology; and
3. a required internship ensures that students actively apply their skills.

What is Writing and Digital Media?

If you enjoy expressing thoughts and ideas through the written word, the B.A. in Writing and Digital Media may be the right degree for you. A degree in Writing and Digital Media will prepare you to write effectively in a variety of workplace and academic settings. It involves the use of precise language to convey information in a way that is easily understood by its intended audience, and it may be used to inform, persuade, instruct, or encourage action. Employers seek graduates with effective writing skills, and the broad nature of this degree opens doors to a variety of careers and to graduate school.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You enjoy communicating thoughts, ideas, and concepts through the written word.
- You are interested in a degree that emphasizes writing and will provide skills that employers seek.
- You like the flexibility of a broad, liberal arts major that will prepare you to enter a variety of fields or to enter graduate school.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WRITING AND DIGITAL MEDIA (<https://berks.psu.edu/academics/baccalaureate-degrees/ba-writing-and-digital-media/>)

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 Writing and Digital Media, a minimum of 123 credits is required:

| Requirement | Credits |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| General Education | 45 |
| Electives | 21 |
| Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements | 24 |
| Requirements for the Major | 39 |

6 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 3 credits of GH courses and 3 credits of GS courses.

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.

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/>).

| Code | Title | Credits |
|---|--|---------|
| Prescribed Courses | | |
| <i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i> | | |
| COMM 234 | | 3 |
| COMM 270 | Introduction to Multimedia Production | 3 |
| COMM 271 | Principles of Journalism | 3 |
| DIGIT 100 | Introduction to Digital Humanities | 3 |
| ENGL 211W | Introduction to Writing Studies | 3 |
| ENGL 214 | Introduction to Creative Nonfiction Writing | 3 |
| ENGL 420 | Writing for the Web | 3 |
| ENGL 471 | Rhetorical Traditions | 3 |
| ENGL 472 | Current Theories of Writing and Reading | 3 |
| ENGL 491 | The Capstone Course in Professional Writing | 3 |
| ENGL 495 | Internship | 3 |
| Additional Courses | | |
| <i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i> | | |
| Select 6 credits from the following: | | 6 |
| COMM 1 | Newspaper Practicum | |
| COMM 2 | Newspaper Editorial Staff | |
| COMM 260W | News Writing and Reporting | |
| | or ENGL 110 Newswriting Practicum | |
| ENGL 130 | Reading Popular Texts | |
| ENGL 213 | Introduction to Poetry Writing | |
| | or ENGL 215 Introduction to General Nonfiction Writing | |
| ENGL 229 | Digital Studies | |
| ENGL 250 | Peer Tutoring in Writing | |

or ENGL 297 Special Topics

| | |
|----------|------------------------------------|
| ENGL 415 | Advanced Nonfiction Writing |
| ENGL 417 | The Editorial Process |
| ENGL 419 | Advanced Business Writing |
| ENGL 429 | New Media and Literature |
| ENGL 474 | Issues in Rhetoric and Composition |
| ENGL 480 | Communication Design for Writers |
| ENGL 494 | Senior Thesis in English |
| ENGL 496 | |
| GD 100 | Introduction to Graphic Design |

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

- Students will develop a comprehensive understanding of the theories and practice of language use.

- Students will demonstrate advanced critical thinking skills, inclusive of information literacy across a range of print and electronic genres.
- Students will demonstrate sophisticated rhetorical abilities and rhetorical flexibility.
- Students will be able to communicate to diverse audiences in a variety of contexts and genres.
- Students will be prepared for a wide range of writing-related careers or graduate programs.
- Students will have the ability to use, analyze, and learn communication technologies.
- Students will develop exceptional textual, visual, and verbal communication abilities.

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/>)

Berks

Christian Weisser

Program Coordinator, Professor
Department of Professional Writing
Franco Building
Reading, PA 19610
610-396-6414
BKWritDigMed@psu.edu

Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2024-25 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 Digital Media, B.A. at Berks 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 or 30H (GWS) [‡] | 3 CAS 100A or 100B (GWS) [‡] | 3 |
| General Education Course (GQ) [‡] | 3 General Education Course (GQ) [‡] | 3 |
| World Language Level 1 | 4 World Language Level 2 | 4 |
| General Education Course (GN or GA or GS) | 3 DIGIT 100 (GH) [†] | 3 |
| General Education Course (GN or GA or GS) | 3 General Education Course (GN or GA or GS) | 3 |
| First-Year Seminar | 1 | |
| | 17 | 16 |

| Second Year | | |
|--|---|-------------|
| Fall | Credits Spring | Credits |
| ENGL 211W | 3 ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D (GWS) [‡] | 3 |
| ENGL 214 | 3 COMM 234N (GH & GS) [†] | 3 |
| World Language Level 3 | 4 Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirement: Knowledge Domain | 3 |
| General Education Course (GN) | 3 General Education Course (Integrative Studies) | 3 |
| General Education Course (Integrative Studies) | 3 General Education Course (Exploration) | 3 |
| General Education Course (GHW) | 1.5 General Education Course (GHW) | 1.5 |
| | 17.5 | 16.5 |

| Third Year | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Fall | Credits Spring | Credits |
| COMM 270 | 3 ENGL 471 [*] | 3 |
| COMM 271 | 3 Supporting Course Selection | 3 |
| Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirement: Knowledge Domain | 3 Elective | 3 |
| Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirement: Knowledge Domain | 3 Elective | 3 |
| Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirement: World Cultures | 3 Elective | 3 |
| | 15 | 15 |

| Fourth Year | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Fall | Credits Spring | Credits |
| ENGL 420 | 3 ENGL 472 | 3 |
| ENGL 495 | 3 ENGL 491 | 3 |
| Supporting Course Selection | 3 Elective | 3 |
| Elective | 3 Elective | 3 |
| Elective | 3 | |
| | 15 | 12 |

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

¹ For General Education Course notations, please be sure to include three (3) credits of United States (US) Cultures and three (3) credits of International (IL) Cultures. Consult adviser for details.

² The following courses are offered Spring Semester only: ENGL 202B.

³ For Supporting Course Selection, consult adviser for list.

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

The Writing and Digital Media degree provides an excellent academic foundation for students to hone their written communication skills. The flexible nature of the program allows graduates to enter a variety of career fields

Careers

The Writing and Digital Media degree provides valuable written communication skills sought by employers in a wide variety of fields. Graduates will be well prepared for positions in media and publishing outlets as editors, news analysts, and reporters; in corporate settings as advertising copywriters, public relations specialists, and technical writers, and in a variety of academic settings.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE WRITING AND DIGITAL MEDIA PROGRAM (<https://berks.psu.edu/academics/baccalaureate-degrees/ba-writing-and-digital-media/>)

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

The B.A. in Writing and Digital Media also prepares students for graduate study in fields such as rhetoric and composition, journalism, creative writing, and other related programs, as well as business and law.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://berks.psu.edu/academics/baccalaureate-degrees/ba-writing-and-digital-media/>)

Contact

Berks

DIVISION OF HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
P.O. Box 7009
Reading, PA 19610
610-396-6416
BKWritDigMed@psu.edu

<https://berks.psu.edu/academics/baccalaureate-degrees/ba-writing-and-digital-media> (<https://berks.psu.edu/academics/baccalaureate-degrees/ba-writing-and-digital-media/>)