

English MA

Communication With Students

Goal Description:

The MA Director utilizes various modes of communication to ensure that students are on track in the program.

Providing Department: English MA

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Advising

Performance Objective Description:

Instituting an advising program so that each student must first be advised by the MA Director in order to register for classes.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Advising

KPI Description:

Each MA student was advised before registering for classes. In order to be advised, students must submit a completed advising form upon which they list the courses that they have taken. The goal of this process is that the student begins to take ownership of their degree without **solely** relying upon the MA Director, Department Administration, the Chair of the Department and/or Degree works.

Each MA student was advised for the summer 2022 and fall 2022 semesters.

Results Description:

All MA students were advised before registration.

Goal I: Critical Thinking in Literary Studies

Goal Description:

The English MA program at Sam Houston State University has three defined goals, all of which share the common aim of preparing graduates as scholars, teachers, professional writers and researchers, and advocates for the Humanities. While the number of graduates who have entered PhD programs or taken teaching positions in area high schools or at two- and four-year colleges is an objective measure of our success in accomplishing this goal, not all of our students pursue further graduate degrees or secondary/post-secondary teaching. With that in mind, the MA faculty has determined three measurable learning objectives that apply uniformly to all MA students in English from Sam Houston State University:

(1) Demonstrate the ability to think theoretically and critically about language and literature, including the ability to apply research methods and critical theories reflective of the current state of scholarship.

To think theoretically and critically about language and literature entails the ability to analyze the composition of literary and non-literary texts, to identify and evaluate literary arguments and cultural ideologies, to situate literary texts within their literary, cultural, and intellectual histories, and to assess and weigh the merits of contending critical readings of primary texts as well as the underpinning methodologies of those critical readings (commonly referred to as "literary theory"), and to identify and articulate innovative and/or original directions in/for current scholarly discussions. It also entails the ability to conduct research in the field, identifying appropriate research resources and scholarship relevant to the project at hand.

(2) Demonstrate the ability to write cogently about language and literature, with an awareness of interdisciplinary connections (see Goal II).

(3) Demonstrate effective professional practices in research, analysis, and communication (See Goal III).

Because all three of these objectives are interdependent, all three are measured by the evaluation of research papers produced in graduate courses, and by graduate examinations.

The goals of the English MA program are aligned with the University’s mission of providing high quality education, scholarship, and service to qualified students for the benefit of regional, state, national, and international constituencies. Additionally, they are in exact alignment with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences mission to provide an understanding of "human beings in their diversity as expressed in their literatures, histories, ideas, values, oral and written expressions, and behavior. By promoting analytic, interpretive, interpersonal, and communication skills, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences facilitates personal growth, competent professionalism, and responsible citizenship."

Providing Department: English MA

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Assessment Exam Books and Diversity

Learning Objective Description:

In order to facilitate student engagement with texts that represent experiences from a variety of different cultures, all students will encounter diverse texts on the yearly list of ten assessment books. The list of assessment texts changes every year.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Demonstration of Critical Abilities: Graduate Examinations

Learning Objective Description:

English graduate students will demonstrate their abilities as independent critical thinkers, researchers, and writers capable of employing sophisticated skills in written analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of knowledge and of using a professional idiom in making written arguments. The program's success in achieving this objective will be measured by student pass rate of graduate examinations.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Graduate Examination Pass Rate as Indicator of Students’ Critical Abilities

Indicator Description:

A passing score on a Graduate Examination is a strong indicator that a student in English has acquired the critical skills appropriate to a graduate-level education in English, and is well-prepared for future professional endeavors. Working closely with faculty, students begin preparing for the Graduate Exams in their first semester, identifying areas of emphasis, which they will diversely explore during their course of study. They will be examined on these areas by three professors after completing 18 credit hours of study, and before the completion of 36 credit hours

Criterion Description:

At least 90% of examination essays will pass (with a grade of pass or high pass).

An examination grading rubric and sample pass, fail, and high pass essays are attached.

One makeup assessment exam was administered with a grade of pass.

Four students took the assessment exam in May 2022, three students passed the exam. The failing student is remediating her writing to see what she needs to work to ensure that she produces stronger graduate-level work.

Attached Files

 [MAAssessmentExamAssessmentRubric2020.docx](#)

Findings Description:

There were four students who took the assessment exam in May '22. One student failed the exam and is being remediated.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Advising

Action Description:

Students must be advised by the MA Director each semester in order to be allowed to register for classes.

All students were advised for fall '21. spring '22, summer '22, and fall '22.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Graduate Examination Pass Rate as Indicator of Students' Critical Abilities

Action Description:

6 students took the assessment exam in May 2021. 5 students passed the exam and 1 student failed. The failing student was remediated and did a successful makeup assessment in fall 2021.

4 students took the assessment exam in May 2022. 3 students passed the exam and 1 student failed. The failing student is being remediated and will do a makeup assessment in fall 2022.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Demonstration of Critical Abilities: Research Papers

Learning Objective Description:

English graduate students will demonstrate their abilities as independent critical thinkers, researchers, and writers capable of employing sophisticated skills in written analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of knowledge and of using a professional idiom in making written arguments. The program's success in achieving this objective will be measured by a holistic assessment of research papers written to complete graduate courses.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Performance in Class Writing as Indicator of Students' Critical Abilities

Indicator Description:

The ability of students to write according to accepted professional standards is a direct indicator of the MA in English program's success in producing graduates who have acquired appropriate critical thinking, researching, and writing skills and are prepared for future professional endeavors. To that end, a significant amount of student writing is required in English graduate coursework.

To assess the effectiveness of class writing assignments in developing students' ability to make sophisticated arguments about literature, language, and writing disciplines in a critical idiom appropriate to professional standards, the faculty undertake an annual holistic review of representative graduate student writing produced during the reporting period.

Professors in graduate classes submit a term paper from every third student on their class rosters; although the number of samples is smaller or larger according to the number of courses taught in a given semester, the sampling represents a broad cross-section of students because it is random. One of the problems with representation, however, is that different sorts of graduate courses require different kinds of assignments. To help with the assessment, then, professors are required to submit the assignments; writing is evaluated not only by the standards that govern the profession but also by its success in fulfilling specific assignments.

Criterion Description:

At least 92% of representative graduate essays evaluated during the holistic assessment will be scored as acceptable or excellent (a combined score of 5 or higher on the scale described below). A rubric for evaluating graduate student writing is attached. Assessment Process: 1. To assure that the assessment reviews a representative sampling of writing, graduate professors in both long terms are asked to submit term papers or other significant writing from every third student listed on their class rosters. 2. Two primary readers from among the graduate English faculty independently read and score each essay under review; in the case of an unreliable result, the essay is referred to a secondary reader, who reads the essay independently, without any knowledge of the previous results (see number 5, below) 3. Each primary reader scores each essay on a 4-point scale, with a score of 4 the highest possible. The two primary scores are added to yield a total, with the final scores ranging from 8 (highest possible) to 2 (lowest possible). A combined score of 5 or higher is passing. A score of 7 or 8 indicates an excellent essay; a score of 5 or 6 indicates an acceptable essay; a score of 4 or less indicates an unacceptable essay. 4. Reliability of the two scores is assumed when both scores from the primary readers are congruent, that is, when they are within 1 point of each other. For example, a score of 6 that would be seen as reliable would mean that both readers marked the essay as a 3. A reliable score of 5 would mean that one reader assessed the essay as a 3 while the other reader assessed it as a 2. 5. Should the primary scores for an essay not be reliable—for example, a 4 and a 1, a 3 and a 1, a 4 and a 2—the essay is referred to a secondary reader. If that reader agrees with the higher score, the essay is certified as acceptable or excellent; if the secondary reader agrees with the lower score, the essay is certified as unacceptable; if the secondary reader's score falls in the middle of two extremes, the average of the three scores determines the outcome.

Attached Files

 [Holistic Grading Rubric](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Performance in Class Writing as Indicator of Students' Critical Abilities

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Increase Diversity of Research

Learning Objective Description:

Demonstrate the critical thinking, research, and writing includes research by BIPOC scholars. Inclusion of methods for diverse research in the English MA Blackboard organization.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Creating a Diverse Student Population

Performance Objective Description:

Consistent with the institutional mission of diversity and inclusion, the English MA program will seek to create a population of diverse students from a variety of different cultural backgrounds.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Increase faculty diversity

Performance Objective Description:

The English MA program needs to diversify its faculty by hiring more faculty of color. This is in keeping with the diverse curricular changes of the newly revised MA program. Ideally, a new faculty hire would be in African American literature or African literature (or literature of the African Diaspora). It is also in keeping with the diversity and inclusion mission of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the university.

Goal II: Critical Research in Literary Studies

Goal Description:

The English MA program at Sam Houston State University has three defined goals, all of which share the common aim of preparing graduates as scholars, teachers, professional writers, and advocates for the Humanities. While the number of graduates who have entered PhD programs or taken teaching positions in area high schools or at two- and four-year colleges is an objective measure of our success in accomplishing this goal, not all of our students pursue further graduate degrees, or secondary/post-secondary teaching. That in mind, the MA faculty has determined three measurable learning objectives that apply uniformly to all MA students in English from Sam Houston State University:

(1) Demonstrate the ability to think theoretically and critically about language and literature, including the ability to apply research methods and critical theories reflective of the current state of scholarship (See Goal I).

(2) Demonstrate the ability to write cogently about language and literature, with an awareness of interdisciplinary connections.

To write cogently about language and literature entails the ability to think critically about texts (their composition, their historical context in which they were produced, and their legacies), to conduct focused research that investigates both primary and secondary sources pertinent and current to the project at hand, to organize, arrange, and weigh critical commentaries, to evaluate and select the most effective scholarly genre of expression for the project at hand (i.e. seminar or conference paper, critical essay, conference poster, book chapter), to present quotations and citations of both primary and secondary sources, including bibliographies, in a manner that is both scholarly and in accordance to professional publication formats, and to articulate and defend scholarly theses in a manner that defines (implicitly or explicitly) what characterizes 'literary studies' in relation to other disciplines.

(3) Demonstrate effective professional practices in research, analysis, and communication (See Goal III).

Because all three of these objectives are interdependent, all three are measured by the evaluation of research papers produced in graduate courses, and by graduate examinations.

The goals of the English MA program are aligned with the University’s mission of providing high quality education, scholarship, and service to qualified students for the benefit of regional, state, national, and international constituencies. Additionally, they are in exact alignment with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences mission to provide an understanding of "human beings in their diversity as expressed in their literatures, histories, ideas, values, oral and written expressions, and behavior. By promoting analytic, interpretive, interpersonal, and communication skills, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences facilitates personal growth, competent professionalism, and responsible citizenship" (SHSU CHSS "Mission and Vision Statement").

Providing Department: English MA

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Demonstration of Critical Abilities: Graduate Examinations

Learning Objective Description:

English graduate students will demonstrate their abilities as independent critical thinkers, researchers, and writers capable of employing sophisticated skills in written analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of knowledge and of using a professional idiom in making written arguments. The program's success in achieving this objective will be measured by student pass rate of graduate examinations.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Graduate Examination Pass Rate as Indicator of Students’ Critical Abilities

Indicator Description:

A passing score on a Graduate Examination is a strong indicator that a student in English has acquired the critical skills appropriate to a graduate-level education in English, and is well-prepared for future professional endeavors. Working closely with faculty, students begin preparing for the Graduate Exams in their first semester, identifying areas of emphasis, which they will diversely explore during their course of study. They will be examined on these areas by three professors after completing 18 credit hours of study, and before the completion of 36 credit hours

Criterion Description:

At least 90% of examination essays will pass (with a grade of pass or high pass).

An examination grading rubric and sample pass, fail, and high pass essays are attached.

One makeup assessment exam was administered with a grade of pass.

Four students took the assessment exam in May 2022, three students passed the exam. The failing student is remediating her writing to see what she needs to work to ensure that she produces stronger graduate-level work.

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Findings Description:

There were four students who took the assessment exam in May '22. One student failed the exam and is being remediated.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Advising

Action Description:

Students must be advised by the MA Director each semester in order to be allowed to register for classes.

All students were advised for fall '21, spring '22, summer '22, and fall '22.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Graduate Examination Pass Rate as Indicator of Students' Critical Abilities

Action Description:

6 students took the assessment exam in May 2021. 5 students passed the exam and 1 student failed. The failing student was remediated and did a successful makeup assessment in fall 2021.

4 students took the assessment exam in May 2022. 3 students passed the exam and 1 student failed. The failing student is being remediated and will do a makeup assessment in fall 2022.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Demonstration of Critical Abilities: Research Papers

Learning Objective Description:

English graduate students will demonstrate their abilities as independent critical thinkers, researchers, and writers capable of employing sophisticated skills in written analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of knowledge and of using a professional idiom in making written arguments. The program's success in achieving this objective will be measured by a holistic assessment of research papers written to complete graduate courses.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Performance in Class Writing as Indicator of Students' Critical Abilities

Indicator Description:

The ability of students to write according to accepted professional standards is a direct indicator of the MA in English program's success in producing graduates who have acquired appropriate critical thinking, researching, and writing skills and are prepared for future professional endeavors. To that end, a significant amount of student writing is required in English graduate coursework.

To assess the effectiveness of class writing assignments in developing students' ability to make sophisticated arguments about literature, language, and writing disciplines in a critical idiom appropriate to professional standards, the faculty undertake an annual holistic review of representative graduate student writing produced during the reporting period.

Professors in graduate classes submit a term paper from every third student on their class rosters; although the number of samples is smaller or larger according to the number of courses taught in a given semester, the sampling represents a broad cross-section of students because it is random. One of the problems with representation, however, is that different sorts of graduate courses require different kinds of assignments. To help with the assessment, then, professors are required to submit the assignments; writing is evaluated not only by the standards that govern the profession but also by its success in fulfilling specific assignments.

Criterion Description:

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Attached Files

 [Holistic Grading Rubric](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Performance in Class Writing as Indicator of Students' Critical Abilities

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Increase Diversity of Research

Learning Objective Description:

Demonstrate the critical thinking, research, and writing includes research by BIPOC scholars. Inclusion of methods for diverse research in the English MA Blackboard organization.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Creating a Diverse Student Population

Performance Objective Description:

Consistent with the institutional mission of diversity and inclusion, the English MA program will seek to create a population of diverse students from a variety of different cultural backgrounds.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Increase faculty diversity

Performance Objective Description:

The English MA program needs to diversify its faculty by hiring more faculty of color. This is in keeping with the diverse curricular changes of the newly revised MA program. Ideally, a new faculty hire would be in African American literature or African literature (or literature of the African Diaspora). It is also in keeping with the diversity and inclusion mission of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the university.

Goal III: Critical Writing in Literary Studies

Goal Description:

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(2) Demonstrate the ability to write cogently about language and literature, with an awareness of interdisciplinary connections (See Goal II).

(3) Demonstrate effective professional practices in research, analysis, and communication.

The demonstration of effective professional practices in research, analysis, and communication entails the ability to define, explore, and conduct sustained research including database and archival investigations; an understanding of, and the ability to produce, conventional and formal writing styles (including informal professional communications such as emails and blog posts, and formal styles such as academic book reviews and journal articles); the ability to format documents in accordance with specified publication formats (MLA format, for example), and the ability to discuss the etiquette of academic/professional presentations that promotes scholarship and academic community, professionalism, and responsible citizenship.

Because All three of these objectives are interdependent, all three are measured by the evaluation of research papers produced in graduate courses, and by graduate examinations.

The goals of the English MA program are aligned with the University’s mission of providing high quality education, scholarship, and service to qualified students for the benefit of regional, state, national, and international constituencies. Additionally, they are in exact alignment with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences mission to provide an understanding of "human beings in their diversity as expressed in their literatures, histories, ideas, values, oral and written expressions, and behavior. By promoting analytic, interpretive, interpersonal, and communication skills, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences facilitates personal growth, competent professionalism, and responsible citizenship" (SHSU CHSS "Mission and Vision Statement").

Providing Department: English MA

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Demonstration of Critical Abilities: Graduate Examinations

Learning Objective Description:

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RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

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Attached Files

 [Holistic Grading Rubric](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Performance in Class Writing as Indicator of Students' Critical Abilities

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Increase Diversity of Research

Learning Objective Description:

Demonstrate the critical thinking, research, and writing includes research by BIPOC scholars. Inclusion of methods for diverse research in the English MA Blackboard organization.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Creating a Diverse Student Population

Performance Objective Description:

Consistent with the institutional mission of diversity and inclusion, the English MA program will seek to create a population of diverse students from a variety of different cultural backgrounds.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Increase faculty diversity

Performance Objective Description:

The English MA program needs to diversify its faculty by hiring more faculty of color. This is in keeping with the diverse curricular changes of the newly revised MA program. Ideally, a new faculty hire would be in African American literature or African literature (or literature of the African Diaspora). It is also in keeping with the diversity and inclusion mission of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the university.

Increase Diversity and Inclusion

Goal Description:

The English MA program will engage in initiatives that increase the diversity of the students and faculty as well as content studied.

Providing Department: English MA

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Assessment Exam Books and Diversity

Learning Objective Description:

In order to facilitate student engagement with texts that represent experiences from a variety of different cultures, all students will encounter diverse texts on the yearly list of ten assessment books. The list of assessment texts changes every year.

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RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

International Applicants and Diversity

Performance Objective Description:

As part of the efforts to diversify the student population, the English MA program will create a plan to address increased interest in the program from international applicants.

We have had two international students accepted into the program. The first international student is starting the program in fall '22. The other international student has deferred admission until spring '23.

New Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Closing Summary

The MA Program in English will continue to improve diversity and inclusion efforts by selecting a diverse group of ten assessment texts. We will also monitor the increasing number of international student applicants.

Consider developing a second graduate methods course that is focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) topics so that students develop skills in such things as writing diversity statements for PhD or other applications; learning about DEI issues as they are specifically related to the field of English (the research process that is specific to a DEI topic).

Provide students with support for taking the assessment exam.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

We have increased the diversity in theme and form of the assessment texts. I held a meeting for students about tips for taking the assessment exam.

For now, the development of a second graduate course focused on DEI topics is on hold while we address recruitment.

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

Our focus has become the recruitment of new students as our enrollment has dropped.