

English Academic Learning Compact

English encourages in its students a sense of enthusiasm for the subject, an appreciation of its continuing social and cultural importance, and a particular sensitivity to the nuances of language and linguistic expression. Students graduating in this area of concentration should have acquired 1) the critical thinking, communication skills and content knowledge that will allow them to interpret and express complex ideas, and 2) will serve as the basis for further study in Literature, English, or related disciplines, or 3) prepare them for careers that demand strong communication skills together with creative and critical thinking.

I. Expected Outcomes (bold indicates particular stress)

1. Students demonstrate a strong ability to analyze and evaluate literary texts in formal and informal written work. Students will be able to defend their analysis and explain why they chose the approach used as particularly effective; [**Creative and Critical Thinking, Communication, Content**]
2. Students demonstrate a basic knowledge of literary periodization and movements; [**Content**]
3. Students demonstrate strong familiarity with the three major literary genres and forms: Most students in their thesis will show in depth knowledge of at least one genre, and should show some understanding of sub-genres such as satire, short story, novel, fantastic, gothic, comedy, tragedy, lyric, epic, etc.; [**Content**]
4. While students are not required to use “Theory” in their senior theses, they should show evidence of thoughtful use of secondary critical resources and to defend their choice of analytical approach or creative approach in both Thesis and Baccalaureate Examination. [**Content, Creative & Critical Thinking, Communication**]
5. English AOC students are expected to have studied “seminal works” from traditions outside Anglophone literatures, and may even incorporate these texts into their theses as appropriate; [**Content, Creative and Critical Thinking**]
6. Students demonstrate a strong ability to engage productively in oral discussion of complex concepts, to contribute to group oral work, to construct arguments verbally, and to make effective formal presentations; [**Communication, Creative and Critical Thinking, Content**]
7. English Concentrators will demonstrate knowledge of the techniques of literary research and allied fields, and show an ability to define a substantial literary research project and carry it to successful completion. They should also demonstrate the ability to provide an appropriate and clear record of resources used and consulted in accordance with standard referencing forms (MLA, Chicago, etc.), and an understanding of principles of intellectual property and credit. [**Communication, Content**]

II. Course Mapping

This English course matrix reflects the types of courses offered that we consider fundamental to the discipline. Individual courses generally fit into one or more of these categories.

Course Type	Content Knowledge	Critical and Creative Thinking	Communication
Survey	Strong focus on content—chronology, genres, literary terms.	research skills, study skills, recall and identification of salient information	minimal discussion, small group work, study groups
Genre	Characteristics of particular genre of literature, development and definition of genres such as drama, lyric, novel, satire, dream visions, humor, etc.	textual analysis; analytical essays	discussion, oral presentations, analytical essays
Period	Literary history, Literary artistic movements (Renaissance, Enlightenment, Romanticism, Modernism, Postmodernism, etc.).	textual analysis; analytical essays	discussion, oral presentations, analytical essays
Thematic	Literary influences, thematic topic knowledge (regional literatures, race/ethnic identity, gender, nationalisms, urban, etc.)	textual analysis; analytical essays	discussion, oral presentations, analytical essays
Major Author	Literary career of major author, range of works, historical context, canonization issues	textual analysis; analytical essays	discussion, oral presentations, analytical essays
Theory and Criticism	Significant critical approaches to literature, ability to recognize approaches and identify strengths and weaknesses of particular approaches, in depth exploration of major critical issues (narratology, authorial intention & biographical criticism, formalisms, post-structuralisms, New Historicism, cultural studies, feminism, psychoanalysis, etc.)	focus on critical methods	discussion, oral presentations, analytical essays

III. Measures to Track Student Progress

1. Student progress is measured at every step at New College.
2.
 - Each term or module course is evaluated on the “Term Evaluation” form and is available online. These evaluations give qualitative reviews of student work, identifying strengths and weaknesses in content knowledge, creative and critical thinking, and communication skills as pertinent.
 - Each semester’s work is planned in advance with the student’s advisor using the New College Contract form, which specifies work to be completed for a satisfactory semester.
 - Each semester’s work is evaluated by the student’s academic advisor in the Contract Certification, which certifies that the student has met the requirements for that semester’s contracted plan of study and work.

- All students must complete 3 Independent Study Projects (ISP), usually undertaken during January Interterm, and requiring the support of a faculty Project Sponsor and the Academic Advisor's concurrence. Each of these is also evaluated on the ISP Evaluation Form, indicating the project's purpose and goals, and identifying the content, communication, and/or creative/critical thinking or practical experience the student has achieved.

- Each student must develop and complete a Senior Project with the support and direction of a Thesis Project Sponsor and two Readers. The Thesis Project Sponsor writes an evaluation of the completed project which usually highlights the project's demonstration of appropriate content knowledge, critical and creative thinking, and written communication. The student's ability to demonstrate good oral communication skills and appropriate library research skills in developing the project are also frequently noted here.

- Each student must sit and pass an oral Baccalaureate Examination at the completion of the Senior Project, with an examining committee consisting of the Thesis Project Sponsor and the two Readers. The successful and satisfactory completion of the Baccalaureate Examination, which is held publicly and advertised to the campus community, is required of all graduating students. An evaluation of the Baccalaureate Examination is also provided to the student and signed by all three members of the Baccalaureate Committee signifying their agreement that the Examination was a passing performance in terms of content knowledge, critical and creative thinking, and oral communication.

2. Students may track their progress also through the use of the "Proposal for a Concentration in British & American Literature" form, available as PDF in the online. Further information is available in the Cover Sheet included on this link. Students may download this form in their first year or before entering New College and track their progress in meeting the genre, period, and national coverage requirements as they progress. Students are expected to show more than one semester-length activity in each of the three periods and genres listed below. In addition, some work in theory/literary criticism is expected. Students should have completed substantial work in both British and North American literary traditions. It is also normally expected that a student will have worked with a majority of the faculty in British and American Literature.

LITERARY PERIOD:

Pre-1700

1700-1899

1900-present

LITERARY GENRE:

Prose

Poetry/Verse

Drama

Students should note that admission to the AOC is by application; mere quantitative coursework is not in itself adequate for admission to the AOC. The quality of a student's work needs to be strongly satisfactory for a student concentrating in Literature, not merely satisfactory for a student taking the course for breadth or personal interest. The study of Literature presumes a sensitivity to linguistic nuance and art, a working knowledge of literary forms, the ability to complete an extended project that is in most cases a written thesis of primarily solid literary analysis, although the method and critical approach may vary, and an interest in varieties of literary art and its function in producing and reproducing culture(s).

IV. Specific Measures to Demonstrate each Graduate's Competencies

Each senior's Thesis Project is carefully evaluated in accordance with the expected outcomes described in section I, and the Project must demonstrate appropriately advanced writing and argumentation skills. In the student's Baccalaureate Examination, the Thesis Sponsor and Readers evaluate skill in oral communication and critical thinking, focusing on the Thesis Project and including some discussion of the student's entire college career. In addition, members of our discipline participate in an ongoing discussion of guidelines and requirements for Thesis Projects, and also of our evaluation practices.