

# The Marquette English Major

One of the most exciting disciplines in academia in recent years, and certainly one of the most compelling at Marquette, has been the study of British and American literature. Not only has it been an avenue for learning to interpret and criticize the writings that, from before Chaucer's time to after Elizabeth Bishop's, have helped to constitute the many-sided phenomena we point to when we speak of culture; it has been an avenue for students to learn who they are in relation to that culture. You may have heard about debates in colleges and universities about the canon--the books that should be studied if one is to know about civilization, Western or non-Western. The English major is right at the center of those debates.

During the years you are a college student, studying English is an ideal way of drawing from and shedding light on the disciplines of history, philosophy, theology, or psychology and the other social and behavioral sciences. Many intellectuals see English as the central discipline in the humanities: it has everything to do with what kind of life you'll lead after college, shaping the values that will inform your work and, thinking strictly of your facility with language, developing the skills with which you'll do that work. With its emphasis on careful reading, thoughtful discussion, and clear writing, English is among the most practical majors a student can pursue.

## Special Features

There are three approaches to the English major at Marquette:

1. A literary approach, which will give you a good sense of major periods, authors, and kinds of literature written in English
2. A writing-intensive approach, which will have you concentrating much of your effort in advanced composition, creative writing, professional writing, and rhetorical theory
3. A teacher-training approach, which will have you working with the Education School to gain a secondary teaching certificate

The fact that Marquette also offers master's and doctoral degrees in English will matter to you as an undergraduate: you may get to know the advanced students in these programs, and you will be served by the same vibrant faculty that serves them. These professors are renowned, locally, for their performance in the classroom; they are well-known, nationally, for what they have published about Shakespeare, George Eliot, or Wallace Stevens, or about Old English, the rise of the novel, or chaos theory, or for their own fiction and poetry. The department is also the home of *Renascence*, a critical quarterly, and the annual *The Eighteenth-Century Novel*.

Undergraduates are active in the English Honor Society and in various student publications--the campus newspaper, magazine, and independent literary journals. Those who want to improve their writing skills outside of class can do so at the Writing Center, where graduate students and undergraduate peer-tutors work, and on a variety of writing internships.

## Career Opportunities

It is now well-established that business, law, government, and media often want young workers who are graduates not of strictly pre-professional courses, but of the liberal arts, especially those like English that emphasize the development of skills in writing and interpretation, strong values, and an awareness of problems in human relations, all of which can give our country's energy a still better sense of direction. Therefore, if you want eventually to go to business, law, journalism or film school, or if you want to go directly into work for a publisher, or an advertising or public relations agency, English makes excellent sense as an undergraduate major. It also makes sense if you want nobly to teach, whether in elementary or secondary school, or in college (though college teaching requires a master's or doctoral degree). There have even been students who, wanting to go to medical school, have majored in English while taking the required science courses.

**Checklists of requirements are available in the English Department Office, 335 Coughlin Hall**