**The M.A. in English at WKU:**

**Guidelines for Graduate School Forms and Capstone Exams for the Thesis and Non-Thesis Options**

**This sheet outlines key steps M.A. degree seeking students in English take from admission to graduation.**

**Graduate Assistants:** The Graduate School requires GAs to register for at least 9 hours per semester. In the final semester, a student can register for fewer than 9 hours. Graduate Assistants must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0.

**Time Limitation for Degree Completion**

All requirements for master's and specialist degrees and graduate certificates must be completed **within six years** of initial enrollment in the program.

**The Graduate Catalog**

Graduate students should consult the Graduate Catalog of year of admission for policy matters: http://catalog.wku.edu/

**M.A. Degree Requirements**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Required Core Courses** | |  |
| [ENG 520](http://catalog.wku.edu/search/?P=ENG%20520) | Introduction to Graduate Studies | 3 |
| ENG 510 Graduate Rhetoric and Writing | | 3 |
| ENG 565 Integrated Teaching English as a Second Language | | 3 |
| ENG 516 Literature and Pedagogy (a new course effective fall 2017) | | 3 |
| Select 3 hours of writing in composition and rhetoric (not creative writing courses) | | 3 |
| Select 3 hours of literature | | **3** |
| **Total Core Hours 18**  **Electives**  Thesis option: Select 6 hours of English 599 (thesis) and 9 additional hours of electives in composition and rhetoric, linguistics, literature, and Teaching English as a Second Language  Non-thesis option: Select 15 hours of English electives in composition and rhetoric, linguistics, literature, and Teaching English as a Second Language  **Total Degree Hours** **33** | |  |

**Order of Courses**

Graduate Assistants should take 520 and 510 in the fall semester of year one and 516 and 565 in the spring semester. The required writing and literature courses and electives can be taken at any time to round out the schedule.

**Graduate School Forms**

Consult the “Current Students” button on the webpage of the Graduate School and choose “Forms” from the drop-down menu. Or cut and paste this link into a browser.

**https://www.wku.edu/graduate/documents/index.php**

**The Order of Required Forms**

**Form 1: The Program of Study**

Required for all degree seeking graduate students prior to earning 12 credit hours of course work. The Program of Study is developed in consultation with and approved by the student's graduate program advisor. Final approval rests with the Graduate School.

To complete the Program of Study, fill in all the required core courses as listed above in “M.A. Degree Requirements,” followed by your choice of electives, as follows:

Course Number Hours

ENG 520 3

ENG 510 3

ENG 565 3

ENG 516 3

ENG (a core writing course) 3

ENG (a core literature course) 3

If you are writing a thesis, list ENG 599 for 6 hours. Then finish the Program of Study with 3 additional three-hour courses in composition and rhetoric, linguistics, literature, and Teaching English as a Second Language.

If you aren’t writing a thesis, list 15 hours of courses in composition and rhetoric, linguistics, literature, and Teaching English as a Second Language.

**Note**: Your original Program of Study may be changed as long as courses are compatible. For instance, if you list English 596 for your core literature course and later decide you want to take English 504 instead, you can take the comparable literature course, but you’ll need to submit a Program of Study Change Form:

**https://www.wku.edu/graduate/documents/prog\_study\_course\_change\_rev7\_2018.pdf**

**Planning Your Program of Study**

Consult the English Department course rotation schedule, along with the course descriptions, to plan your 33-hour program semester-by-semester:

**Rotation Schedule**

https://www.wku.edu/english/pdf\_files/english\_department\_course\_rotation\_2018.pdf

**Course Descriptions**

http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate/arts-letters/english/#coursestext

**Graduate School Required Forms Continued**

**Form 2: Thesis/Dissertation Committee Selection Form**

Required before registering for ENG 599, thesis hours.

https://www.wku.edu/graduate/students/committee\_selection.php

**Form 3: Application for Graduation**

Submit the semester prior to degree completion.

**The Capstone Exam for Thesis and Non-Thesis Options**

**Thesis Option**

If you’ve a research topic you wish to explore in depth—and if you’ve the discipline to complete an extended independent scholarly project—then the thesis might be for you. First, you’ll need a thesis adviser. Consult with a potential adviser for your project. Once a faculty member agrees to chair your thesis committee, you can recruit two additional faculty members to serve as readers. You’ll submit the **Thesis/Dissertation Committee Selection Form** before enrolling in ENG 599.

The **comprehensive exam** for the thesis option is an oral defense of the project. First you’ll complete the thesis with the guidance of your committee. Once the thesis is near completion, consult with the committee about a mutually convenient day and time for your defense. Then contact Kimberly Nessler in the main office and ask her to reserve the Robert Penn Warren Room for your meeting. Ideally, the committee should have a copy of your thesis at least a couple of weeks in advance of the thesis defense.

**M.A. Degree Non-Thesis Exam Options**

**Option I: Written Exam with Oral Defense of Seminar Paper**

Early in your final semester, recruit a committee of three faculty to serve as your exam committee. Ask a faculty member you know well and who respects your work to serve as the chair. This option has three parts:

1) A four-hour written exam. The committee will create exam prompts based on your course work. Schedule a date and time for the exam, which will be administered by DELO in Garrett. The committee will evaluate the exam and provide feedback.

2) Select a scholarly project written for a course to revise, create research goals, and explore possible publication outlets. Revise the paper, aspiring to “publishable quality.” Submit the paper to your committee when it’s good enough—that is, when you’ve thoroughly researched the topic, investigated publication outlets, and crafted a quality piece of academic writing.

3) After taking the written exam and getting feedback on it and your revised scholarly project, schedule the oral exam. During this exam, you’ll discuss the process of paper revision, your findings in researching publication outlets for your paper, and your plans for future research on this project. Faculty may also ask questions about your written exam.

**Option II: Portfolio of Scholarly Essays with Oral Defense of Portfolio**

Early in your final semester, recruit a committee of three faculty to serve as your exam committee. Ask a faculty member you know well and who respects your work to serve as the chair. This option has four parts:

1) Submit a portfolio of seminar papers, or the equivalent, from at least three courses taken as part of the MA program.

2) Revise one of the seminar papers for submission to a peer-reviewed scholarly journal. The revision of this paper should be done under the supervision of the advisor and demonstrate full knowledge of the secondary work done in the chosen field, as well as the theoretical assumptions governing the field.

3) Introduce the portfolio with a statement of approximately 1000 words which should discuss the questions, research strategies, and theoretical thinking that have informed your graduate work, as evidenced by the papers presented in the portfolio.

4) After submitting the portfolio to the committee members, contact Kimberly Nessler in the main office to schedule the Robert Penn Warren Room for your portfolio defense. Be prepared to discuss the strengths of your scholarship and identify a target journal for publication, providing a full justification for the choice and explaining what specific revisions have been done toward publication.