

# English

Department of English, College of Arts & Sciences



## Major Program

The department offers majors in English (Literature and Language) and English Education. Students in both options can take a variety of courses in areas reflecting the major approaches that define the study of language and literature today. The study of *Forms* provides students precise language and concepts to understand how the structures of literature inform its meaning. The study of *Traditions* emphasizes the historical development of literature, particularly in terms of British and American literatures. *Language and Theory* courses give students the tools to precisely understand language and reflect on how texts come to have meaning in a variety of discourses, cultural contexts, and philosophical perspectives. *Social Justice* courses encourage students to explore how literary studies address issues of cultural power and politics. Examples would include the role of literature in responding to racism, gender identities, class conflict, and disability.

In addition, all majors take a professional development course and a capstone seminar. English Education majors take courses in the teaching of language, literature, and writing.

The department also offers minors in English, Creative Writing, and Professional Writing, and participates in interdisciplinary programs in Women's Studies and Film Studies.

## Faculty

Department of English courses are taught by faculty holding doctoral degrees from distinguished universities across North America. All are dedicated educators, skilled in fostering active student participation. They are also active scholars and have to their credit many books, chapters in books, articles, and scholarly presentations at professional conferences.

## Scholarships

The department offers 14 scholarships for English majors. Ten are named after distinguished former faculty members in the department: two Paul Blackford Scholarships for achievement in the study of British literature, the Olive Fite Award for achievement in the study of American literature, the John Castle Award for an incoming first-year English major, the Irving Garwood Award for exceptional interest in Shakespeare, the Alfred V. Lindsey Scholarship in writing, the Beth M. Stiffler Scholarship in English education, and the Nai-Tung Ting and Wanninger Scholarships. Four others acknowledge generous donors: two Lila S. Linder Scholarships, the Barbara and John Blackburn Scholarship for English Education, and the John Merrett Scholarship. The Department of English "Scholar of the Year Award" honors the outstanding junior or senior in the department. Detailed information on scholarships is available from the department advising office, (309) 298-2189; Western's Scholarship office, (309) 298-2001; or on the Web at [wiu.edu/Scholarship](http://wiu.edu/Scholarship).

## Honors in English

To be eligible for the Centennial Honors College, entering freshmen must have an ACT composite score of at least 28 OR have a 26 or 27 composite ACT and be in the top 15% of their graduating class OR have an ACT composite score of at least 24 and be in the top 10% of their high school graduating class. A comparable SAT score is acceptable. Transfer and current WIU students who wish to join the Honors College (including the Quad Cities Honors Program)

must have a 3.4 grade point average on a 4.0 scale based on 12 or more semester hours. Honors credit is given for honors coursework completed at other accredited institutions. To find out more, visit [wiu.edu/Honors](http://wiu.edu/Honors).

General honors seminars in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences provide students with the opportunity to explore key academic issues with distinguished faculty members. In the English major, honors students take courses for honors credit and, as seniors, prepare an honors thesis under the direction of a department faculty member. To find out more, visit [wiu.edu/Honors](http://wiu.edu/Honors).

### Student Activities

The department offers two student societies for its English majors: (1) the WIU chapter of Sigma Tau Delta is our national honorary society, and (2) the student chapter of the National Council of Teachers of English is for those English majors who are planning careers in teaching. Our majors are also active in publishing our annual literary magazine, *Elements*, featuring works of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction written by our students and are likewise producing our department newsletter "The Mirror and the Lamp." A wide variety of student activities and organizations are available to all Western students. Learn more at [wiu.edu/osa](http://wiu.edu/osa).

### Special Opportunities

The department offers small classes with accessible faculty in historic Simpkins Hall. It also offers personalized professional advising, computerized writing classrooms, internship opportunities, in-house editing experience, a writing center, tutorial support, and an honors program. In addition, through a gift from the Fred E. and Lola Austin Case Endowment, the department sponsors a biannual Visiting Writers Series, which provides residencies for well-known authors throughout the country and greater opportunities for interaction between students and established writers.

### After College

Our majors find that their degrees are extremely marketable. Our English Education graduates have been highly successful in finding teaching positions. English majors can choose from a variety of occupations, including abstract writer, advertising copywriter, bibliographer, copy editor, corporate communications specialist, editor, grant writer, librarian, public relations specialist, proofreader, researcher, author/screenwriter, technical writer, and (with additional skills or further education) lawyer, reporter, newscaster, literacy trainer, media planner, speech writer, news director, paralegal, press secretary, publisher, script reader, and translator/linguist. The list of possibilities is endless because people trained to read critically and write clearly are in demand everywhere in an increasingly demanding job market.

### Contact Information

#### Department of English Chair

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#### Department of English Academic Advisor

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[wiu.edu/english](http://wiu.edu/english)

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