The University of Mississippi

Department of English

B.A. Degree in English
The University of Mississippi, which is located on a picturesque campus in the idyllic town of Oxford, is one of the most exciting places in America to study English and American literature and creative writing. The impulse to write and read is in the air around Oxford. After all, it was the home of William Faulkner, one of the greatest writers of the 20th century, and more recently, Oxford has counted authors Barry Hannah and John Grisham among its inhabitants. The town also boasts a creative vibe through its lively music, art, and culinary scenes.

The Department of English, with around 275 majors, is one of the largest in the College of Liberal Arts and offers students a wide range of literature courses from Beowulf, Chaucer and Shakespeare to African American Literature, Blues Culture, Ecocriticism, Animal Studies, Film Study, Literary Theory, and contemporary Southern fiction and poetry. We also offer beginning and advanced workshops in the writing of poetry, fiction and screenwriting. Upper-division classes are small (15–30 students), allowing for a close working relationship between students and professors. Talented faculty members, who are engaged in independent research, teach literature classes, and widely published writers lead our creative writing classes. Among our faculty are scholars such as Karen Raber, current Executive Director of the Shakespeare Association of America, Adam Gussow, whose book *Beyond the Crossroads: The Devil and the Blues Tradition* was awarded the John G. Cawelti Award, and Jay Watson, Howry Professor of Faulkner Studies. We are proud to have in our ranks renowned novelist and screenwriter Chris Offutt (*True Blood, Treme, Weeds, Country Dark*), Mississippi’s Poet Laureate Beth Ann Fennelly, Kiese Laymon (author of the memoir *Heavy*), Matt Bondurant (on whose novel the gripping Hollywood motion picture *Lawless* is based), and the award-winning novelist Tom Franklin (*L.A. Times Book Award*). To allow students to showcase their talents outside as well as in the classroom, the English department runs various creative writing and academic essay contests, all of which carry cash prizes that can be applied toward tuition costs.
Every year, our campus hosts the international Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, the Conference for the Book, and the Southern Writers/Southern Writing Conference, which is organized entirely by our graduate students. The Department of English is a vibrant hub of intellectual activity which regularly hosts talks by renowned scholars and activists from around the world. Many literary readings take place on campus but also at Square Books, one of the country’s best-known independent bookstores, where you can browse the shelves for the latest mystery novel or sit on the balcony with a cup of coffee and look out over the courthouse and square.

THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OFFERS FOUR DISTINCT DEGREES:

B.A., M.A., M.F.A. in creative writing and Ph.D. For more information about the program and degree requirements, please visit our website: english.olemiss.edu. We’re also on Facebook: facebook.com/umengl.
STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

“Being an English major has been one of the best experiences I have had at Ole Miss. Each class I have taken has challenged and strengthened me as a writer and critical thinker, and has propelled me to dive deeper into literature and theory for more insight into the world we live in. The professors in this department are invested in the lives of their students and make great efforts to instill close bonds with each pupil. Being a part of the English program has made me want to become an English professor myself and work towards empowering my future students the way that the faculty here have empowered me.”

—Sheffield Spence, English major, Class of 2018

“People may ask, ‘Why a B.A. in English?’ I tell them I like to travel.”

“My experience as an English major has been one of absolute acceptance and support. There’s never a bad idea or interpretation, and I have learned a lot about myself just from taking in the different ways that my professors and peers read the texts in class. There’s so much diversity in our course material too. Some of my favorite classes have been my creative writing workshops because my professors have challenged me to think about my writing process in new ways. I am constantly encountering new ideas and new authors, which has made my experience so much more enriching.”

—Mallerie Lovejoy, English and Linguistics major, Class of 2018

“For me, studying English at Ole Miss has meant the recurrence of the question, ‘Why do we study literature?’ Each time, it arises from a different literary and cultural moment, and each time, the professor’s passion for the text beyond the page brings me new perspective. I will leave Ole Miss with a wide scope of literary knowledge and enhanced communication, but that seeming snag—feeling more acutely human, yet retaining a critical viewpoint of life—is the great gift the English faculty has helped me to discover.”

—Mitchell Hobbs, Class of 2012

Reasons to Study English at the University of Mississippi

- Small upper-division literature classes on all aspects of British, American and World Literature
- Writing workshops in fiction, poetry, creative non-fiction, and screenwriting
- Study with top-notch faculty
- Annual writing contests (essay, poetry, fiction)
- Frequent public readings by nationally acclaimed authors
- Study abroad opportunities
- The town of Oxford with its legacy of great writers
- Future academic and professional opportunities
- Internships—there are internships in the English department (publicity and media, facebook, twitters, and Instagram), the College and Liberal, and with outside entities like the University of Mississippi Press.

Go to: english.olemiss.edu/internships/
“Since I graduated from Ole Miss with a degree in English in 2006, I have been a high school teacher and a software developer, and I am now an education coordinator for a software developer training program. Excellent communication skills were a requirement for each of these disparate positions, and the skills that I developed and the projects that I produced as an English major at Ole Miss stood me in good stead for each of these opportunities. I found that my professors were consistently delighted to spend time working with me both in and out of class. From countless hours in the library coffee shop to one professor who helped me to get an article published a full year after my graduation, the English department at Ole Miss has proved to me time and again that its members are determined to help their students succeed.”

—Melissa Smith, Class of 2006

“I never did study abroad in the traditional sense, but my English classes definitely provided me with an opportunity to travel. I spent four years traveling through time and space and humanity with writers, professors and fellow students in our exploration of the English language. I stepped in and out of books and stories and essays, each time gaining an appreciation of how language is manipulated to create meaningful expression and convey ideas and truths about ourselves and our world. People may ask, ‘Why a B.A. in English?’ I tell them I like to travel.”

—Julie Dhossche, Class of 2011
THE ENGLISH MAJOR

The major consists of 30 hours of course work at the upper division, level, including period requirements, a gateway course, and a capstone course. Students with an interest in creative writing can pursue a creative writing emphasis by taking 12 hours of creative writing courses.

What Can I Do with an English Degree?

English majors and minors go into publishing, journalism, medicine, hospital and business administration, finance, business, marketing, education, and law. They start technology companies and small businesses. They teach, work in museums, libraries, and non-profits. They write novels and press releases.

Affiliations

African American Studies, Gender Studies, Southern Studies, Medieval Studies Minor, Environmental Studies Minor.

Student Organizations

Sigma Tau Delta (English honors society)

Awards, Prizes, and Scholarships

- W. Alton Bryant Award – for rising juniors, $500 per semester for four semesters
- Fayssoux Corneil Campbell Award – $1,000 for one academic year
- Elmo Howell British Literature Award – $1,000 scholarship
- Dorothy A. Halladay Award – $1,000. Eligible students have an overall 3.5 GPA, and 3.7 in English
- Best Undergraduate Student Essay Award – $500
- Virginia Morgan Scholarship – $500. Eligible students have an overall 3.0 GPA and a 3.5 in English
- Evans Harrington Creative Writing Scholarship – $1,000 tuition waiver for a freshman or sophomore who shows the most promise in creative writing
- The Ella Sommerville Award – two $100 awards for a junior or senior who demonstrates the most talent in fiction and poetry
OUR FACULTY

Adetayo Alabi, Associate Professor  
Ph.D., University of Saskatchewan  
Teaching Interests: Postcolonial Studies (especially African, African American, and Caribbean), Literary Theory (especially Postcolonial and Feminist), Autobiographical Genre in Comparative Black Studies.

Patrick Alexander, Associate Professor  
of English and African American Studies  
Ph.D., Duke University  

Sarah Baechle, Assistant Professor  
Ph.D. Notre Dame  
Teaching and research interests: Middle English and Old and Middle French languages and literatures; Medieval manuscript and print culture as well as Medieval authorship theories and literary criticism.

Deborah Barker, Associate Professor  
Ph.D., Princeton University  
Teaching Interests: Gender Theory and Criticism, 19th- and 20th-Century American Literature, Film.

Monika Bhagat-Kennedy, Assistant Professor  
Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania  
Teaching and research interests: Postcolonial and Transnational Literatures; Postcolonial Studies with a focus on South Asia; Nineteenth-century British Imperial Literature and Philosophies of Empire, Theory of the Novel.

Matt Bondurant, Associate Professor  
Ph.D., Florida State University  
Teaching interests: creative writing, fiction, non-fiction and American literature.

Lindy Brady, Assistant Professor  
and Assistant Chair  
Ph.D., University of Connecticut  
Teaching and Research Interests: Old English, medieval Irish and Welsh, Old Norse, and Anglo-Latin languages and literatures; the role of the landscape in medieval texts.

Erin Drew, Assistant Professor  
Ph.D., University of Notre Dame  
Teaching and Research Interests: Teaching and research interests are Eighteenth-century poetry and the novel, Ecocriticism, Science and literature, and Jane Austen and pop culture.

Leigh Anne Duck, Associate Professor of English, editor of The Global South  
Ph.D., University of Chicago  
Teaching Interests: Southern Literature and Culture, Film, Literary Geography, Modernism.

Cristin Ellis, Associate Professor  
Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University  

Beth Ann Fennelly, Professor  
M.F.A., University of Arkansas  
Teaching Interests: Poetry and the Writing of Poetry, Non-fiction.

Ann Fisher-Wirth, Professor and Director of Environmental Studies Minor  
Ph.D., Claremont Graduate School  
Teaching Interests: 20th-Century American Literature, 20th-Century Poetry, Creative Writing (Poetry, also Creative Non-fiction), Ecocriticism, Literature and Environment.

Tom Franklin, Associate Professor  
M.F.A., University of Arkansas  
Teaching Interests: Fiction Writing.

Ari Friedlander, Assistant Professor  
Ph.D., University of Michigan  
Teaching Interests: Early Modern English Literature and Culture; Histories of Gender, Sexuality, and Social Status; Queer Theory; Queer Historiography; Disability Studies.

Melissa Ginsburg, Assistant Professor  
M.F.A. University of Iowa  
Teaching Interests: Creative writing and American literature.

Adam Gussow, Professor of English and Southern Studies  
Ph.D., Princeton University  
Teaching Interests: African-American Literature, Southern Literature, Blues & Jazz Literary and Cultural Studies, American Road Narratives.

Joan Wylie Hall, Senior Lecturer  
Ph.D., Notre Dame  
Teaching Interests: American, Southern and Women’s Literature, with Research Interests in Southern Women’s Writing and African American Literature.

Jaime Harker, Professor and Director of Sarah Isom Center for Women  
Ph.D., Temple University  
Teaching Interests: 20th-Century American Literature, with an Emphasis on Book History, Gender, and Sexuality. Additional Research Interests in Gay and Lesbian Studies, American Studies, the Pacific Rim.

Derrick A. Harriell, Associate Professor of English and African American Studies and Director of M.F.A. Program  
Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee  
Teaching Interests: Creative Writing (Poetry), African American Literature.

Mary Hayes, Associate Professor and Director of Medieval Studies Minor  
Ph.D., University of Iowa  
Teaching Interests: Old and Middle English Literature, the History of the Senses/Sound Theory and Magic and the Occult, History of the English Language.
OUR FACULTY

Blair Hobbs, Senior Lecturer
M.F.A., University of Michigan
Teaching Interests: American Literature, Advanced Composition,Freshman Composition, Applied Writing and Poetry Workshops.

Ivo Kamps, Professor and Department Chair
Ph.D., Princeton University
Teaching Interests: Early Modern Literature, Shakespeare, Literary Theory, Film.

Kiese Laymon, Otillie Schillig Chair of English and Writing
M.F.A., Indiana University
Teaching Interests: Creative writing, fiction and non-fiction, American literature, and contemporary literature.

Kathryn McKee, McMullen Associate Professor of English and Southern Studies
Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Teaching Interests: United States Literature, U.S. Southern Literature, Global South Studies, Film Studies, Writing by Women, Humor Studies.

Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Professor
M.F.A. The Ohio State University
Teaching and Research Interests: creative writing, poetry, non-fiction, environmental literature and writing.

Daniel A. Novak, Associate Professor
Ph.D. Princeton University
Teaching and Research Interests: Victorian Literature and Culture, 19th century Literature and Visual Culture, Photography and Film, Nineteenth-Century Theories of Race, The History of Sexuality, Oscar Wilde.

Chris Offutt, Associate Professor
M.F.A., University of Iowa
Teaching Interests: Fiction, Non-fiction, Screenwriting.

Dustin Parsons, Senior Lecturer
M.F.A. Bowling Green State
Teaching interests: Creative Writing and American Literature.

Karen Raber, Professor and Executive Director of the Shakspeare Association of America
Ph.D., University of California, San Diego

Peter Reed, Associate Professor
Ph.D., Florida State University
Teaching Interests: Early American Literature, Early American and Transatlantic Theatre, Performance Studies, Critical Race Studies, Cultural Studies.

Gregory A. Schirmer, Professor Emeritus
Ph.D., Stanford University
Teaching Interests: Irish Literature, Translation, Modernism.

Ethel Scurlock, Associate Professor of English and African American Studies, Senior Fellow
Lucky Day Residential College
Ph.D., Bowling Green State University
Teaching Interests: African American Literature, Drama, Harlem Renaissance, American Literature.

Jason Solinger, Associate Professor
Ph.D., Brown University
Teaching Interests: Literature of the 18th-Century and Restoration.

Daniel Stout, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies
Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University
Teaching Interests: Romantic Literature, Victorian Literature, the Novel.

Annette Trefzer, Associate Professor
Ph.D., Tulane University
Teaching Interests: American Literature, Literary Theory, Global South Studies and Southern Literature, Minority Literatures: Native American Literature and African American Literature.

Jay Watson, Howry Professor of Faulkner Studies
Ph.D., Harvard University
Teaching Interests: American Literature, Southern Literature and Culture, Faulkner.

Ian Whittington, Assistant Professor
Ph.D., McGill University

Caroline Wigginton, Assistant Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies
Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin
Teaching and Research Interests: American Literature to 1865, Native American Literatures, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Transatlantic 18th-Century.

Peter Wirth, Senior Lecturer
Ph.D., Harvard University
British and American Literature.
For additional information visit www.english.olemiss.edu or contact

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