

Sewanee School of Letters MA Requirements and Expectations

Course Requirements

M.A. students are required to complete 30 semester hours (typically 10 course credits), which may be done in two ways. All students will take 8 courses, normally enrolling in two courses per summer. After earning these credits, students seeking to earn the M.A. may earn their final course credits either by writing a thesis or by enrolling in two more courses. No course with a grade lower than B- may be applied toward the degree. The “core” for all M.A. students will consist of courses in English literature, of which one must be Shakespeare, courses in American literature, of which one must cover literature written before 1900, and at least one class in non-English literature in translation. Beyond that, students are encouraged to strike a balance between courses covering material from before and after 1800. As many as two Creative Writing Workshops may be counted toward the M.A. degree.

Policy on Transfer Credit

Up to two graduate course credits (or six semester hours) may be transferred from other accredited institutions to count toward a degree from the Sewanee School of Letters. Each course must be approved for transfer by the Director, preferably before the work is done. Transfer course credits cannot have been counted towards any other degree, whether taken at Sewanee or another institution, and must be of a grade of B or better. Graduate credits, whether they are earned at Sewanee or transferred from another institution, cannot count toward a degree after ten years have elapsed.

Thesis

The M.A. thesis is an original scholarly monograph, 40 to 60 pages in length. Work on the thesis may begin at any time after required course work has been completed. The thesis is written under the supervision of an advisor, chosen by the candidate and appointed by the Director of the School of Letters, who may be any willing member of the School of Letters faculty. As the project nears completion, a second reader will be appointed by the Director. When the thesis has been completed and conditionally approved, the candidate for the degree will submit to a one-hour oral examination conducted by the advisor and second reader. Students engaged in thesis work should register for English 599. Thesis work carries six hours of graduate credit.

Expectations

Course work and thesis work in the School of Letters require independent thinking and writing. Students in the M.A. program are expected not only to understand what others have said about literary works under study, but to contribute original understandings of their own.

Sewanee places major emphasis upon honor. Its students are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, discipline, a sense of individual responsibility, and regard

for other people. In exchange for this conduct the University grants its students freedom and privacy. The Honor Code is a time-honored tradition at Sewanee, and your matriculation at the University acknowledges your willingness to live within the bounds of academic, personal, and community relationships the Honor Code upholds.

Learning Expectations for MA Program

The School of Letters expects graduates of its MA program to have developed the following skills and areas of expertise:

1. They should be able to write clear, professional English prose.
2. They should be familiar with the conventions of literary criticism, including its characteristic terminology.
3. They should be sufficiently familiar with the history of literature in English to be able to place individual works in historical context.
4. They should be able to read an individual literary text closely, with due attention to both content and technique.
5. They should be able to identify and locate published scholarship and criticism with which to supplement their reading of a text, and to incorporate the insights gained from these sources into that reading.
6. They should be able to combine all these skills in a convincing, well-developed argument about the meaning of a literary work.