

## School of Arts and Sciences

ENGLISH  
WRITING

www.english.pitt.edu

Through the ages, written language has been one of the most influential tools of human civilization. Skilled and talented writers have the potential to not only reflect and report on the world around them, but to change it as well. Writers impart news, record history, entertain, give instruction, inspire action, and help us better understand the world we live in.

If you like to write and want to learn how to write well, the English writing program at the University of Pittsburgh is a great place to start. It is one of the oldest and largest writing programs in the United States and offers concentrations in fiction, poetry, and two options in journalism, newspaper or magazine writing. The variety of writing classes surpasses that at most universities and classes are typically small. You learn from faculty who are experienced writers themselves; some are reporters or editors at local newspapers and magazines, and many publish widely as novelists, poets, and non-fiction writers. The program's Albert T. Primo Eyewitness News Electronic Journalism Center offers prospective journalists the opportunity to learn about writing and delivering news in the modern television news format.

There is no substitute for experience itself and this is especially true when it comes to writing. To improve your skills, you can contribute to campus publications such as the *Pitt News*, *Impulse*, *Papercut*, and the *Three Rivers Review*. Groups such as the Western Pennsylvania Writers Initiative and the Kuntu Writer's Workshop help young writers hone their craft and get their work published. Internships offer valuable experience in writing and communications and can be arranged at local newspapers and magazines, nonprofit organizations, and corporations, as well as national publications such as *Newsweek*. Finally, as you will see from the program's curriculum, it is important to read and hear other writers' work to help you improve your own. Professional writers read and discuss their work at the Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series, Three Rivers Lecture Series, Hemingway's Cafe Reading Series, and other events sponsored by the University.

With a degree in English writing, there are countless careers you can pursue. Writing positions are available at major daily newspapers, magazines, or publishing houses. Public relations, nonprofit concerns, education, entertainment, advertising, business, medicine, and high technology are all fields that seek and highly value employees with writing skills and talent. Many graduates of Pitt's English writing program have also gone on to publish books and win major prizes, including Michael Chabon (*The Mysteries of Pittsburgh*, *Wonder Boys*, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Klay* [Pulitzer Prize, 2001]), and Judith Vollmer (*Level Green*, *The Door Open to the Fire*).

**Required Course Work**

You are required to take a minimum number of credits in English writing courses, including the following courses:

## ENGWRT 0400 Introduction to Creative Writing (Optional)

This course may be taken by any undergraduate interested in experimenting with poetry and fiction. You can take this course before starting first-level writing courses to help determine if writing is the major for you.

**Tracks**

Writing majors must fulfill a concentration in at least one of these tracks—**fiction**, **poetry**, or **journalism (newspaper or nonfiction writing)**. Each track consists of three levels of courses: *introductory courses*, which offer a broad introduction to the skills required of writers in that area and are generally taken no later than the second term of the sophomore year; *intermediate courses*, which refine and develop writing skills in specific genres such as poetry, fiction, and nonfiction writing; and *senior seminars* and *internships*, which allow you to apply your writing skills to one in-depth project or in a professional role in the workplace.



**Fiction:** Writing majors concentrating in fiction have the following course requirements:

**ENGWRT 0520 Introduction to Fiction Writing**

To introduce you to the mechanics of fiction writing, this workshop entails reading representative stories, performing writing exercises, writing one or more short stories, and revising your work frequently. You learn how to develop characters, structure plot, and incorporate sequence and causality, point of view, and conflict into your writing. Students read each other's work and discuss it as a group.

**ENGWRT 1010 Intermediate Fiction (*two sections required*)**

Students apply their developing writing skills to creating several short stories in this course. Classroom discussion centers on students' work and addresses problems of fiction writing, such as plot, style, and characterization. You also read a wide range of contemporary fiction to help you continue to develop your writing technique.

**ENGWRT 1094 Readings in Contemporary Fiction**

In this seminar, you read late modern and contemporary fiction and critical writing by novelists and short story writers. A wide variety of fictional texts are covered, and emphasis is on understanding how these texts contribute to the development of fictional forms and relate to the culture that produced them.

**ENGWRT 1710 Senior Seminar in Fiction (*two sections required*)**

Senior seminars are designed to help students who are familiar with the craft of writing refine their writing skills, adding originality, subtlety, and meaning to their stories. You continue to critique each other's work and read a variety of professionally written stories. One of the two required sections of this course must be taken during your senior year.

**Journalism—Newspaper:** Writing majors concentrating in news writing take the following courses:

**ENGWRT 0550 Introduction to Journalism**

This course introduces you to the reporting and writing skills basic to all nonfiction writing. You learn about the nature of news; differences between news, feature, and magazine writing; lead writing and the inverted pyramid; using quotations and attribution; reference sources; and interviewing. *The Associated Press Stylebook*, the primary reference book for news writing style, is also introduced.

**ENGWRT 1310 Newspaper 1**

Students in this course learn the "art" of feature writing and how to refine their reporting skills. Writing assignments include profiling individuals, reporting trends, taking polls, and writing about a community. You continue to critique your own and others' work and are required to read a newspaper regularly.

**ENGWRT 1320 Newspaper 2**

As you improve your writing and reporting skills, this course lets you take on more complex stories and a final, in-depth project. Requirements include writing for *The Pitt News* or other local newspapers and following current events. Legal and ethical issues related to the responsibilities and limits of the press are discussed in class.

**ENGWRT 1760 Advanced Reporting**

This course stresses in-depth interpretive reporting in specialized news areas such as science, business, and politics. You continue to hone your writing and reporting skills as you write longer pieces that incorporate more information and have a wider scope.

**One Topic in Nonfiction course chosen from:**

ENGWRT 1391 Writing the Review

ENGWRT 1392 Documentary Film Writing

ENGWRT 1393 Sports Writing

ENGWRT 1394 Science Writing

ENGWRT 1395 Public Relations Writing

ENGWRT 1398 Corporate Speech Writing

ENGWRT 1399 Topics in Nonfiction: Newspaper

ENGWRT 1401 Topics in Nonfiction: Magazine

ENGWRT 1403 Topics in Nonfiction: Electronic Media

ENGWRT 1405 Broadcast Writing

**One of the following courses:**

ENGWRT 1900 Internship: News

ENGWRT 1910 Internship: Public Relations

**Journalism—Nonfiction:** Writing majors concentrating in nonfiction writing take the following courses:

ENGWRT 0550 Introduction to Journalism

ENGWRT 1330 Nonfiction 1

This course introduces you to the basic process of writing a variety of magazine articles, from finding story ideas, conducting research, writing articles, and assessing markets in which to sell your articles. Class discussion focuses on writing and research techniques and the critique of student-produced and professionally written work.

ENGRT 1340 Nonfiction 2

In this course, you write a short topical essay and a longer article based on research and interviews. Emphasis is on professional preparation from the idea stage to production of a final version suitable for submission for publication. Topics explored include immersion journalism, documentary and in-depth reporting, oral history, and “new” journalism.

ENGWRT 1390 Readings in Contemporary Nonfiction

Students read and discuss several pieces from a writer’s perspective in this course. The structure, theme, approach, and technique of each piece is examined in class.

**One Topics in Nonfiction course chosen from courses such as:**

ENGWRT 1391 Writing the Review

ENGWRT 1392 Documentary Film Writing

ENGWRT 1393 Sports Writing

ENGWRT 1394 Science Writing

ENGWRT 1395 Public Relations Writing

ENGWRT 1398 Corporate Speech Writing

ENGWRT 1399 Topics in Nonfiction: Newspaper

ENGWRT 1401 Topics in Nonfiction: Magazine

ENGWRT 1403 Topics in Nonfiction: Electronic Media

ENGWRT 1405 Broadcast Writing

ENGWRT 1750 Senior Seminar in Nonfiction

In this course, you work on longer, more sustained pieces of nonfiction, from idea to completion, including essays, profiles, and literary journalism. Similar to graduate writing workshops, students read and discuss each other’s writing at most meetings of this course. Related topics are also discussed, including writing habits, editing skills, research methods, interviewing approaches, and the publishing world.

## **Poetry**

Writing majors concentrating in poetry have the following course requirements:

ENGWRT 0530 Introduction to Poetry Writing

Through writing exercises, analysis of classic and contemporary poetry, and frequent revision of your own poetry, this course helps you learn the basic elements of poetry writing.

ENGWRT 1210 Poetry Workshop (*two sections required*)

Students in this advanced poetry writing course regularly write and rewrite their own poetry. The primary text studied is your own writing, although you also read recently published poetry.

ENGWRT 1290 Readings in Contemporary Poetry

In this seminar, you read late modern and contemporary poetry and critical writing by poets. A wide variety of poetic forms is covered. Emphasis is on examining themes to understand the work’s unique contribution to the development of the poetic form and its relationship to the culture in which it was produced.

ENGWRT 1730 Senior Seminar in Poetry

This course is for students who have a fair amount of experience writing and reading poetry and knowledge of 20th-century poetry written in English. You spend the course critiquing your own and other students’ work, as well as discussing the work of contemporary poets.

## **Writing Electives**

English writing majors are also required to take one or two writing electives. This can be a course in a different writing track, an additional topics course, an independent study project, or an (additional) internship.

## Literature Requirements

All writing majors are required to take 12 credits in literature, selected from a wide variety of courses, including:

### Courses in Literature Before 1800 (6 credits required)

ENGLIT 0580 Introduction to Shakespeare

ENGLIT 0590 Formative Masterpieces

ENGLIT 0597 Bible as Literature

ENGLIT 0641 Tragedy

ENGLIT 0644 Myth and Folktale

ENGLIT 1100 Medieval Imagination

ENGLIT 1115 Chaucer

ENGLIT 1125 Renaissance in England

ENGLIT 1126 Advanced Shakespeare

ENGLIT 1127 Shakespeare on Film

ENGLIT 1128 Women in Shakespeare

ENGLIT 1132 Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama

ENGLIT 1150 Enlightenment to Revolution

ENGLIT 1153 British Drama: Restoration to World War I

ENGLIT 1154 18th-Century Novel

ENGLIT 1551 Introduction to the English Language

### Courses in Literature After 1800 (6 credits required)

ENGLIT 0500 Introduction to Critical Reading

ENGLIT 0570 American Literary Traditions

ENGLIT 0572 Introduction to African Literature

ENGLIT 0610 Women and Literature

ENGLIT 0615 Black Literature

ENGLIT 0616 Immigrant Experience

ENGLIT 0625 Detective Fiction

ENGLIT 0626 Science Fiction

ENGLIT 0627 Literature of Sports

ENGLIT 0628 Working-Class Literature

ENGLIT 0630 Sexuality and Representation

ENGLIT 0635 New Literature

ENGLIT 0641 Tragedy

ENGLIT 0642 Comedy

ENGLIT 0643 Satire

ENGLIT 0645 Fantasy and Romance

ENGLIT 1020 History of Literary Criticism

ENGLIT 1028 Literature and Psychoanalysis

ENGLIT 1170 The Romantic Period

ENGLIT 1175 19th-Century British Literature

ENGLIT 1180 Victorian Literature

ENGLIT 1181 Victorian Novel

ENGLIT 1200 American Literature to 1860

ENGLIT 1210 The American Renaissance

ENGLIT 1212 The American West

ENGLIT 1220 Emergence of Modern America (1860–1914)

ENGLIT 1250 20th-Century American Literature

ENGLIT 1255 American Theatre

ENGLIT 1280 Contemporary American Women Writers

ENGLIT 1300 Realist Tradition

ENGLIT 1310 The European Novel

ENGLIT 1325 The Modernist Tradition

ENGLIT 1342 Contemporary Literature in Context

ENGLIT 1370 Makers of Modern Drama

ENGLIT 1372 Contemporary Drama

ENGLIT 1380 World Literature in English

ENGLIT 1587 Utopian Literature

ENGLIT 1661 Science Fiction

ENGLIT 1704 Women Novelists

ENGLIT 1738 Irish Literature

**Related Area:** The School of Arts and Sciences (A&S) requires that students take a minimum of 12 credits in one A&S subject other than their major. Many English writing majors take courses in film studies and women's studies to fulfill this curriculum; other possibilities include a foreign language, history, linguistics, literature in translation, philosophy, political science, psychology, or sociology.

### For more information on the English writing program, contact:

University of Pittsburgh

Department of English

Dr. Fiore Pugliano or Linda Orbach

Cathedral of Learning 617B

Pittsburgh, PA 15213

412-624-6510 or 412-624-6656

### For more information on other A&S majors, contact:

University of Pittsburgh

Office of Admissions and Financial Aid

Alumni Hall, 4227 Fifth Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15260

412-624-PITT

E-mail: [oafa@pitt.edu](mailto:oafa@pitt.edu)

Web site: [www.pitt.edu/~oafa](http://www.pitt.edu/~oafa)

## Additional Opportunities . . .

### Study Abroad

Studying abroad is an exciting way to add an international perspective to your undergraduate education, while strengthening your credentials as a graduate. Through the Pitt in London program, students may take courses in history, literature, politics, and art history taught by British faculty and a visiting University of Pittsburgh faculty member. Juniors and seniors can conduct internships for credit at a variety of British organizations, focusing on communications, business, politics, theatre, or museum management. Field trips to places of historic and cultural importance such as Stonehenge and Stratford-Upon-Avon are included. Students live in dorms in Kensington or with a family in the London suburb of Wimbledon. There are countless other opportunities throughout the United Kingdom to study English writing. Students may choose to study in Scotland, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, or England. Study abroad is an exciting, challenging plunge into the academic life and culture of another country.