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*New York University*

# Department of English

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*M.A. Handbook*

*2020-2021*

**Contains information on:**

Program Requirements  
Registration  
Special Project  
Graduation



## A Welcome from **Lauren Allen, Zohal Karimy, Morgan Mitchell, and Noelle Viger** Graduate Student Representatives for MA Students

Welcome to the Master's program at NYU's Department of English! We hope you have a fantastic experience in the program. Graduate school can be a tough transition, especially getting used to the increased level of expectation and rigor, but the faculty and students in the English department are incredibly supportive of you and your academic goals. There are many opportunities for you to

research, discuss, learn, and grow as long as you put yourself out there. As the GEO representatives for the MA program, we are here to listen to you, whatever your concern may be, and we are very interested in knowing what your needs are so that together we can make 244 Greene even better. Good luck with the coming semester!

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## Some Advice

1. Before you start your MA, think about your personal goals for yourself, as they may differ significantly from the goals of others in your program. That said, be sure to remain open-minded because your goals may change and you may gain things from this program that you never expected. Talk to professors whom you trust and remember that the more honest you are about how you're feeling, the more professors can tailor their advice to your actual situation.
2. Go to every library resource session available—you'll be thoroughly grateful once you're in the midst of final papers!
3. Read the MA Handbook!

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**We are very glad to welcome you to the NYU English Department, and to our graduate program. Please take the time to read this booklet carefully, as it will help you get the most out of your time with us. Should you have any questions, concerns, or problems you should not hesitate to seek advice.**

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### Lytle Shaw

Professor Lytle Shaw is the Director of the Master's program. He can help you plan the best route through the program, help find an appropriate advisor for your thesis, and deal with any academic issues that arise. You should be sure to consult with him at least once during the course of your first semester.

lds2@nyu.edu  
Greene St., Room 607

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Lisa Gitelman Director of  
Graduate Studies (2020)

gitelman@nyu.edu  
Greene St., Room 209

Haruko (Hal) Momma Director of  
Graduate Studies (2021)

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### Elizabeth McHenry

Professor, the Chair of our  
Department, is always pleased to  
hear from MA students.

elizabeth.mchenry@nyu.edu  
Greene St., Room 214

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### Lisette Florez

Lisette Florez is the Administrator of the Graduate Program in English and your first port of call in any storm. She will guide you through registration and all other administrative puzzles, and has rarely met a problem she can't solve!

lf42@nyu.ed  
Greene St., Room 207

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For some of the best advice about classes, professors, and graduate life in general you should consult your fellow students.

**Please read the rest of this booklet through as it will tell you all kinds of things you will want to know!**

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# Your MA Studies

## A Brief Overview

Most graduate courses carry four credits so you should plan to take eight courses during your time with us. 'Introduction to Advanced Literary Study for MA Students,' which you must take in your first semester, carries only 3 credits: the missing single credit is made up by your special project. (This is usually completed in your final semester, and represents the culmination of your degree: you should plan to spend at least as much time on it as you would spend on a regular course, but it carries only one credit point.) We offer some summer classes, and since you can graduate in May, September or December you have a great deal of flexibility to plan your own schedule—**just be sure you know and have met our distribution and other requirements—please see the next page.**

As you sign up for classes you should bear in mind that our distribution requirements mandate that you take at least one class where the focus is predominantly in the literature of each of the following 3 time periods: Medieval and/or Renaissance; the 18th and/or 19th centuries; and the 20th and/or 21st centuries. The same classes are not offered every year, so you should take them as soon as you can: an early start on meeting these requirements has the added benefit that MANY students find their interest awakened in areas that they had not previously considered for future work.

*A full load is 2-3 classes per semester. If you are working on your degree full-time, and planning to take two years to graduation, your pattern of work might look something like this:*

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### Fall Semester I

Introduction to Advanced Literary Study for MA Students, and one or two other graduate classes

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### Spring Semester I

Two or three graduate classes

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### Fall Semester II

One or two graduate classes and the beginning of work towards your special project

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### Spring Semester II

One or two graduate classes and the completion of your special project

*Brief Overview cont'd*

*If you chose to complete your degree in 18 months it might go like this:*

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**Fall Semester I**

Introduction to Advanced Literary Study for MA Students, and two other graduate classes

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**Spring Semester I**

Three graduate classes

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**Summer Semester**

One or two graduate classes

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**Fall Semester II**

One or two graduate classes and the completion of your special project.

*If you wanted to finish in a calendar year it is (just!) possible, but only for the strong of heart.*

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**Fall Semester I**

Introduction to Advanced Literary Study for MA Students, and two other graduate classes

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**Spring Semester I**

Three graduate classes

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**Summer Semester**

Two graduate classes and your special project.

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## Registration

Registration for the Fall semester begins in mid- April; for the Spring and Summer semesters it begins in mid- November. Registration and course information is sent out via email. Course information, descriptions and syllabi are available on the English department website a few weeks before registration opens. Many of our classes fill quickly: **it is always a good idea to plan and register early.**

As they advance through the program students are encouraged to consult with the Director of the MA Program to choose their classes. You may register yourself online using Albert ([albert.nyu.edu](http://albert.nyu.edu)). You may also drop/add classes through the first weeks of classes using the drop/add menu on Albert.

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## Continuous Enrollment

All students must maintain continuous enrollment until their degree is conferred. This can be done either through coursework or by registering for maintenance of matriculation—Lisette can always make this work for you.

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# A Checklist of Dates 2020–2021

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## Fall Semester 2019

Registration begins .....	Monday, April 20, 2020
First day of classes .....	Wednesday, September 2, 2020
Drop/add period ends .....	Tuesday, September 15, 2020
MA Special Projects due .....	Friday, December 11, 2020
Final grades are due .....	Monday, December 21, 2020
Last day of classes .....	Friday, December 11, 2020

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## Spring Semester 2021

First day of classes .....	Monday, January 25, 2021
Last day of classes .....	Monday, May 10, 2021
MA Special Projects due .....	Friday, May 7, 2021
Final grades are due .....	Tuesday, May 18, 2021
Commencement .....	Wednesday, May 19, 2021

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## Summer Semester 2021

First day of classes .....	Summer Session I .....	Monday, May 24, 2021
	..... Summer Session I .....	Sunday, July 3, 2021
Frist day of classes .....	Summer Session II.....	Tuesday, July 6, 2021
	..... Summer Session II .....	Sunday, August 15, 2021
MA Special Projects due .....		Monday, August 2, 2021
Final grades are due .....		Tuesday, August 17, 2021

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# MA Requirements

1. Completion of 32 credits. Twenty-four of these 32 credits must be earned through course work within the department, but the other eight credits (the equivalent of two graduate courses) may be taken in other relevant departments. Registration for courses that originate outside the department and are not cross-listed with English must be approved by the Director of the Master's program.
2. A mandatory three-credit seminar, "Introduction to Advanced Literary Study for MA Students," to be taken in the first term of matriculation.
3. One four-credit literature course focused in each of the following historical periods: Medieval and Early Modern (roughly, literature before 1700); Eighteenth and/or Nineteenth centuries (1700-1900); and the Twentieth and/or Twenty-first centuries (1900- present)
4. Submission of a thesis totaling about 9,000 words (approximately 35 pages), written under the supervision of a department faculty member, within the context of a required one-credit Guided Research course.
5. Completion of all MA program requirements within five years from matriculation.

**To qualify for the degree, a student must have a GPA of at least 3.0, must complete a minimum of 24 points with a grade of B or better, and may offer no more than 8 points with a grade of C. A student may take no more than 36 points toward the degree.**

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## A Note on Distribution Requirements

Please remember that you are required to take one four-credit literature course focused in each of the following historical periods: Medieval and/or Renaissance (roughly, literature before 1700); Eighteenth and/or Nineteenth; Twentieth and/or Twenty-first centuries. These classes do not have to be taken in the English department, but they do have to have their primary focus and reading in literature of the required period. (You could, for example, take a Dante class in the Italian department, or a class on Mallarmé in the French department, to meet your Medieval and early Modern, or your Post-Romantic requirements respectively.) We take these requirements seriously: if you are in doubt as to whether a class meet a certain period requirement please consult the Director of the Master's program.

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## Courses in Other Departments

You may take 8 of your 32 credit points, or two classes, in other departments at NYU. If you are tailoring your studies towards a particular period or issue you might, for example, think of taking classes in history, art history, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Irish Studies, Near Eastern Studies. Note that many of the classes in the foreign languages departments are taught in English.

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## Transfer Credit

MA students may transfer up to 8 credits from a previous institution on condition that these have not already been used towards a degree at another institution. If you would like to do so, please make an appointment to see the Director of the Master's program. Credits are transferred point for point.

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## Incompletes

The English Department does not permit instructors to assign “Incomplete” as the grade for a graduate course. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from completing his or her coursework for a grade in a timely manner, the student should contact the Director of Graduate Studies [or the Director of the Master’s] to make arrangements. Only requests having to do with exceptional conditions (e.g., prolonged illness, etc.) will be considered.

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## Leave of Absence

To request a leave of absence, please make an appointment to see the Director of the Master’s Program.

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# The MA Thesis in Brief

The MA Thesis constitutes the capstone to student's academic work in the English MA program, and it should accordingly represent the degree candidate's strongest scholarly and critical effort to date.

1. It must be written under the supervision of a faculty member within the context of a required one-credit Guided Research course, to be taken in an appropriate semester during the student's period of matriculation. The request form for this course may be found on our departmental website: <http://as.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyu-as/english/documents/GuidedResearchRequestForm.pdf>. In addition, students should also enroll in the thesis-writing workshop offered in the semester in which they are writing up their work. This workshop meets approximately every two weeks, usually in the evenings; it carries no credit, but attendance is mandatory.
2. It should consist of an essay totaling between 9,000 and 11,000 words (i.e. 35-45 pages).
3. The thesis will be marked by two examiners, your advisor and another faculty member. It must be of at least B quality to be acceptable for the degree.
4. It should be submitted in two copies. One copy—which must have a special title page prepared according to the format set out below—will be deposited permanently with the student's records in the department office; the other will be returned to you.

## Thesis Guidelines

Theses must conform to the following guidelines:

1. The cover page must include the thesis title, your name, and your student ID number; your advisor's name and a space for her or his approval signature; the month and year the degree will be conferred (not the month in which the thesis is submitted); and the statement: "A thesis in the Master's Program in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at New York University".
2. All sources for quotations and paraphrases must be documented. You may use any of the standard citation styles (MLA, Chicago, social science, etc.), subject to your advisor's approval, provided you consistently follow a single style throughout the thesis.
3. The thesis should be printed or typewritten on standard paper, and double-spaced.
4. We prefer unbound theses—a simple binder clip is sufficient. If you decide to bind your thesis, please make sure that your original, signed cover page is unbound.

**Here is some advice from three former students about writing a thesis:**

“Do your homework before you put even a single word to page. Research every possible facet of your subject, and follow every loose thread, no matter how tangential it may initially appear. If this leads you far afield, that’s good; my initial proposal concerned not *Gravity’s Rainbow*, but detective fiction tropes in *V.* and *The Crying of Lot 49*. Find the established scholarly line on your subject, and don’t be afraid to challenge it. And when it comes time to write, just write. Throw words across the page if you’re ever stuck—they could very well take you where you need to go.”

“The biggest difficulty I encountered in writing my thesis was wading through the vast amount of scholarship on Virginia Woolf. For weeks, I read avidly; and for weeks, my page count remained low. If I could impart a single piece of advice, it would be: quit reading and start writing! The “hunting and gathering phase” (as my adviser called it) of reading and research is vital, of course. But ultimately it is the writing process—and the writing process only—that will make ideas clear and truer interests evident. When in doubt, write your way through, as tough as it may be.”

“Find a Call For Papers that interests you and submit an abstract. If you do get the chance to attend a conference, the paper topics are likely to be so diverse that you are bound to find something that sparks your interest. It will also give you a good sense of the state of the conversation in your area.”

## **Guidelines for Students (and their Supervisors) of the MA Thesis**

Your thesis is undertaken within the context of a required Guided Research course, ENGL-GA 3900, for which you will be registered during an appropriate semester of your program. It may be begun at any time during the MA program but is expected to represent a culmination of your experience here. If you are aiming to complete the program in two years, and are hoping to continue your studies in a PhD program, a good time to undertake writing up of the special project is the Fall semester of your second year, since it will focus your mind on future specialization and, if at least some of the writing is finished early enough, will be available for you to use part of it as a writing sample for your PhD applications. (These applications are usually due at the beginning of December, so you might want to identify a topic and supervisor at the end of your first year, so that you can start reading towards the project over the summer.) We try to offer a thesis writing workshop each semester in which there is demand: this workshop meets approximately every two weeks, usually in the evenings; it carries no credit, but attendance is mandatory. The aim is to help students keep to an effective writing schedule, and to experience the benefits of exchanging and discussing writing drafts with each other.

You should also expect to receive close supervision from a faculty advisor, who will meet with you several times to help in the planning and research of the thesis. Each project is different, and your supervision needs are hard to predict, but your supervisor might be expected to help you in the early stages with the identification of a focused topic, the development of a bibliography, and the writing up of a prospectus or abstract; and he or she should then read and comment on at least one draft of your writing. The project should total between 9,000 and 11,000 words (i.e. 35-45 pages). It may be a revision of a paper written for an earlier class, or an entirely new undertaking, but it should be a piece of independent research on a topic with potential to advance scholarship in the field, and it should be of a nature that allows you to demonstrate mastery of the protocols of critical, scholarly, or theoretical writing. Special projects that do not fit the rubric of a traditional thesis may also be approved at the discretion of the Director of the MA program.

Identifying a supervisor and a topic will be easier for some students than for others. By the end of your first year you may know what you want to work on, and with whom. If so, you may approach the professor concerned to discuss your ideas and the possibility of working with them; if you prefer you can ask the Director of the MA program to approach them for you. Professors in the English department expect to be working with one or possibly two students each year on their MA theses: if they have no room to take you on they may be able to suggest an alternative supervisor. If you are unsure of the viability of your topic, or do not know who to work with on it, you should consult the Director of the MA program, who will be able to advise you.

Each thesis will also be read and commented upon by a second reader—usually from the English department, but occasionally from another department. If you have ideas about who you'd like to have as a second reader, feel free to be in touch with that professor. But be sure also to tell the Director of the MA program, who will otherwise find one for you. It is important to note that you must complete the thesis in the semester in which you begin it. If you sign up for a fall thesis, for instance, it is not possible to complete the thesis in the spring.

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## Graduation

Students may officially graduate in September, January or May. The commencement ceremony for all schools is held in May. You must apply for graduation via Albert. Please check the academic calendar for graduation application deadlines.

Students will receive an official check sheet one month prior to graduation from the office of Graduation Services. If you have any questions once you receive the check sheet, please see Lissette, or consult the Director of the MA Program.

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## Travel Grants

GSAS awards travel grants of up to \$500 to defray the cost of travel to conferences: application details may be found at <http://as.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyu-as/english/documents/DepartmentEnglishGraduateTravelGrant.pdf>.

The department has established its own fund to support graduate student travel for conferences, research, and other opportunities for professional development. MA and PhD students currently enrolled in the Department are eligible to apply after they have exhausted other sources of travel support available from the Graduate School. MA students are entitled to make one request to the fund during the course of their enrollment in the program; additional requests will be considered as a secondary priority.

Applicants for conference support should submit documentation of accepted papers or other forms of active participation, budget of travel expenses, and endorsement by a faculty advisor, confirming student's progress towards the degree. Applicants for research support should submit a detailed research plan, identifying materials/collections and explaining their importance to the MA thesis project, budget of travel expenses, and endorsement of application by faculty advisor. Funds will be paid through partial or full reimbursement of receipts for travel expenses. Applications are due December 1 and April 1 of each academic year. Applications and supporting letters should be submitted to Lissette Florez in the Graduate Program Office.

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## Language and Other Skill Grants

Limited funds are available to help MA students take language or special skills courses (for example, a summer course in intensive Latin) to help them prepare for PhD or job applications. Please contact the Director of the MA Program if you would like to pursue such an option.

### Publication

To facilitate academic publishing by graduate students, the English Department offers modest funding for support in securing permissions in relation to articles accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals or edited scholarly volumes. To request such funding, a student should contact the Director of Graduate Studies and provide proof of acceptance for publication.

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## Prizes

The [Millicent Bell Thesis prize](#) is our departmental prize for the best thesis submitted each year; its value is currently \$500.

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## Mailboxes, Lockers, and Email

Most communication in the English Department is done through email. Please make sure to update your email with Lissette.

All students have a mailbox in the department on the second floor of 244 Greene St. Notices, events, and calendars are usually distributed to your mailbox. Faculty may also use mailboxes to return graded papers.

Lockers can be rented in the library by the semester, and these are perhaps the most convenient for you.

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## Coffee

There are tea and coffee making facilities on the 4th and 8th floors of Greene St., which are free to graduate students.

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## Building Access and Room 805

MA students have building access to 244 Greene St., Monday-Friday from 7:30am-9:30pm. After 3pm room 805 is available for graduate student study: it is near the kitchen on the eighth floor and is a nice place to work.

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# Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when the student presents the words, ideas or research of others as his or her own work. Even if you cite the source from which you have taken material at some point, both word-for-word copying without quotation marks and the reproduction of whole sequences of ideas or sources without clear and immediate attribution are considered to be plagiarism. The submission of assignments purchased or otherwise derived from another person or a company is expressly forbidden. Be particularly careful in using Internet sources.

**Please note that the submission of the same written work, in whole or in part, for two or more classes without the express permission of all the instructors involved is also a violation of Academic Integrity.** Consult with your course instructors and the Director of the MA Program in advance if you wish to submit the same work for more than one class or requirement. A verbal understanding is sufficient.

Students in our graduate programs are expected to maintain the highest level of Academic Integrity. Any instance of plagiarism will result in the student's receiving a failing grade for the course or, where relevant, Special Project. The student will be subject to further sanction—including dismissal from the University—at the discretion of the Department Chair.

