

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH: CONCENTRATION IN COMPOSITION

Overview

All students pursuing the MA in English are required to complete a 30-unit program consisting of 15 units of core requirements (including a 3-unit culminating experience course) and 15 units in an area of concentration: Composition, Linguistics, or TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

The Composition concentration provides students with a broad background in the theory, research, policy, and practice of teaching composition and postsecondary reading to diverse student populations.

Students completing the Master of Arts with a Concentration in Composition typically either teach at community colleges or go on to doctoral work with a view to teaching at a college or university. At the university level, specialists in composition and rhetoric are in increasing demand as researchers and directors of undergraduate writing programs. Two-year colleges are increasingly recognizing the need for professional training in the teaching of composition and are hiring accordingly.

Program Learning Outcomes:

- English MA students will critically evaluate scholarship using knowledge of disciplinary history, foundational theories, epistemologies, and scholarly debates in order to participate in professional communities of Composition, TESOL, and Linguistics.
- English MA students will conduct principled inquiry (critical reflection, observation, and/or formal research) using appropriate methods and tools of analysis in order to address disciplinary questions and problems of practice.
- English MA students will produce effective written and oral presentations that follow professional disciplinary standards of Composition, TESOL, and Linguistics.
- English MA students will apply pedagogical knowledge and skills to the teaching of language, literacy, or linguistics.
- Composition students will articulate a coherent teaching philosophy that has been informed by practical experience and knowledge of relevant teaching principles and research.
- Composition students will create appropriate lessons and curricula for students in postsecondary reading and writing classes.
- Composition students will produce critical reflections on teaching practices and materials and how they embody educational values of ethics, social justice, diversity, and globalization.

Admission to Program

Applicants submit all materials through the Cal State Apply portal (<https://calstate.liasoncas.com> (<https://calstate.liasoncas.com/>)).

Application materials include:

- **A 1 to 2-page statement of purpose.** Applicants should discuss their interest in pursuing the MA program; their relevant work or volunteer experience, if applicable; their readiness to meet the rigors of graduate-level coursework; and their future professional goals.

- **A 5 to 10-page writing sample.** This can be an academic paper and/or a sample of writing from a professional setting. The sample should demonstrate the applicant's ability to produce clear, concise, well-polished prose.
- **Letters of recommendation.** Letters are optional; however, we encourage those students who have weaknesses in their prior academic record to submit one or two letters in support of their application.
- **Transcripts.** The University requires transcripts of all prior postsecondary coursework. Applicants are expected to have an overall GPA of 3.0 or better.
- The GRE is not required.

Nonnative Speakers of English

Applicants whose native language is not English and whose B.A. was completed outside the United States must present evidence of English language proficiency through one of the following:

- TOEFL iBT: 95 (writing score of at least 24)
- TOEFL paper-based: 64 (writing score of at least 24)
- IELTS (Academic): 7.0 (with 6.5 for each component)

Applicants who do not meet this minimum TOEFL or IELTS requirement will not be admitted; there is no conditional admission.

The TOEFL or IELTS is not required for non-native English speakers who completed their Bachelor's degree in the U.S. or another English-speaking country.

However, applicants who obtained a B.A./B.S. from an American university in a major other than English/Linguistics might consider submitting a recent TOEFL or IELTS score as evidence that their language proficiency is strong enough to do graduate study in an English department.

Recommended Courses

Applicants who need additional writing support may be advised to take ENG 670 or other academic writing courses.

Applicants who lack classroom experience may be advised to take ENG 726 or obtain other classroom experience during their first year in the program.

Written English Proficiency Requirement

All MA students must meet two University writing requirements:

Level One

Proficiency is demonstrated through the student's application materials.

Level Two

Proficiency is demonstrated through satisfactory performance in the culminating experience course for the MA (ENG 895 or ENG 898).

Academic Standing

Graduate students must maintain strong academic standing:

- Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better.
- All core and concentration courses must be taken for a letter grade; only courses in which the student earns a B- or better may count toward the MA degree.
- Only one elective course may be taken on a credit / no credit basis.

Arts in English with a Concentration in TESOL. Students must earn an overall GPA of 3.0 and a B- or better in all courses listed in that document.

Additional Information

- Applicants are encouraged to refer to the English department website (<https://english.sfsu.edu/>).
- Applicants may also contact the English Department graduate programs coordinator (english@sfsu.edu) with any questions.

English MA: Concentration in Composition - 30 units

Core Requirements (15 units)

Code	Title	Units
ENG 702	Introduction to Graduate Study of Composition, Linguistics, and TESOL	3
ENG 707	Topics in Language Analysis	3
ENG 728	Topics in Sociolinguistics	3
ENG 733	Seminar in Student Teaching	3
Culminating Experience:		3
Select one:		
ENG 895	Field Study or Applied Research Project	
ENG 898	Master's Thesis	

Composition Requirements (15 units)

Code	Title	Units
ENG 700	Introduction to Composition Theory	3
ENG 709	Seminar in Teaching Integrated Reading and Writing	3
ENG 710	Course Design in Composition and Post-Secondary Reading	3
Courses selected with an advisor		6

Culminating Experience Requirement

A field study or research project, or a Master's Thesis, must be successfully completed by all candidates for the degree. The field study or research project, which investigates and/or applies knowledge acquired in the student's program of study, must have the recommendation and approval of two faculty field study or research project advisors. All SF State specifications for completion of a field study or research project must be met. Students may take ENG 895 once. Students who fail ENG 895 will receive an Incomplete (I) grade; they may resubmit their project once for a passing grade. If their project fails a second time, they will be recommended for declassification. As part of the Culminating Experience requirement, students are required to present their projects at the end-of-semester graduate student conference.

During the second-to-last semester in the program, students are required to complete an Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form, which lists the courses completed to satisfy the degree requirements for the Master of