BEING AN ENGLISH MAJOR

The major you choose in college can become an important part of your identity: every major imparts a certain skill set, a particular perspective. So it means something to be an English major. You’re exposed to some of the greatest literary works in history through the careful study of the canon—and works “outside” it. Being an English major also means being able to read between the lines—a skill that isn’t necessarily limited to text. In short, the experience of majoring in English shouldn’t be limited to just fulfilling the requirements. Through the various programs that the English department has to offer, it’s possible to find a real sense of community, to befriend like-minded individuals, and to explore your literary interests in a way that goes far beyond ticking titles off a list of “great books.”

THE ACCELERATED BA-MA PROGRAM

The Accelerated Bachelor-Master Program allows CAS students to start working on their majors during their undergraduate studies. This dual degree program enables students to obtain their masters in a span of five years—reducing the time and money usually spent on graduate programs. The program also offers generous scholarships. English majors especially can choose to do the BA-MA Teacher Education program that would enable them to complete their BA and masters in teaching in just five years. Click here for more information.

HONORS PROGRAM

Qualified third-year students are encouraged to apply to the English Honors program, which allows you the opportunity to pursue a year-long independent thesis project with the help of a faculty advisor during your senior year. Your project is also guided by an honors colloquium that assists in developing your research and criticism skills. Admission to this program is competitive—students applying should have exemplary writing and research skills, and should have performed well in their English classes. For more information, visit the Honors Track website.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

What can one do with the English major? The department’s internship program allows you to intern for course credit; past and current internships have included the Village Voice, Oxford University Press, and Random House, to name a few. How do you go about finding an internship, and how can you have a successful internship experience? The accompanying internship seminar deals with these questions and provides useful information related to the different aspects of an intern, including how to network, office etiquette, and resume and cover letter tips.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Interested in conducting research in a field that isn’t usually covered by classes offered in the department? You can apply for an independent study by presenting a research proposal to the member of faculty that you’re interested in working with. Just make sure you approach the professor well before the start of the semester.

WORKING IN THE DEPARTMENT

The English department often has openings for administrative positions—this is yet another way to familiarize yourself with the ins and outs of the department, as well as some work experience—and cash—into the bargain. Check with department aide Shanna Williams for more information.

THE CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE SERIES

One of the newer programs of the English department, the Contemporary Literature Series brings contemporary writers into undergrad classrooms to share and discuss their work with students; the CLS also organizes public literary events. These events provide an excellent opportunity to interact with the authors as well as a setting where you can meet other English majors. The program is run by a group of undergraduate CLS Fellows; you can apply to be a fellow, or just volunteer to help organize and/or blog for the events. More information can be found on the CLS website. See page 19 for this semester’s CLS events.

THE ENGLISH CHANNEL

If you are ever curious about what’s going on in the department, the English Channel is your best resource (along with The Blotter, of course)—it’s an interactive site that showcases the ongoing activities of students and the faculty in the fields of research, teaching and community-building. Tune into the latest department news here.