Programs

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Department Overview

The Department of English and Philosophy offers broad curricula in two disciplines. English studies develop writing skills, explore human experience as represented in literature, and treat the nature of language. Philosophy courses examine such topics as the nature of reality, the ways that knowledge is acquired, and the basis for ethical choices.

The department offers the B.A. and M.A. in English, the Ph.D. in English and Teaching of English, and the B.A. in philosophy. English and Philosophy courses also can contribute to the general education and personal enrichment of students in all disciplines.

Equipped with an undergraduate degree in either English or philosophy, students are prepared to enter graduate degree programs, to pursue training in such professions as journalism, law, religion, or medicine, or to embark upon a great variety of careers in government, business, and industry that demand broad, liberal arts perspectives and strong observational, fact-finding, analytical, and communication skills. English students with certification are prepared for careers in elementary and secondary education.

English Program

The English undergraduate program offers majors and minors in Literature, Professional Writing, and Creative Writing.

The Department has articulated the following goals and student learning outcomes for students at the undergraduate level.

Mission and Goals

Undergraduate English programs in the Department of English and Philosophy provide students wishing to pursue a liberal arts education training in the study of language, literature, writing, and culture. Such training will provide students with strong communication skills, an ability to gather information and use it critically, an understanding of the function of language within the culture, and a historical and critical understanding of the role literature plays within the human experience.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. **Goal:** To understand the significance of language, literature, and culture as active forces in the formation and expression of identity, experience, and cultural and historical patterns.

   **Outcomes:**
   - Students can identify and explain the influences of language, literature, and culture on the formation and expression of identity and experience.
   - Students can identify, explain, and evaluate the influences of language, literature, and culture on the formation and expression of cultural and historical patterns.

2. **Goal:** To understand literature and other cultural artifacts as important sources of knowledge about the diversity of human experience, insight about history and culture, and wisdom about what it means to be human.

   **Outcomes:**
• Students can identify and describe the ways in which literature and other cultural artifacts are important sources of knowledge, insight, and wisdom.
• Students can compare and evaluate knowledge they derive from literary and cultural sources.
• Students can articulate and defend the value of language, literature, and culture in giving meaning to our lives.

3. **Goal:** To understand language as a medium of common linguistic principles, a medium that is indispensable to thought, communication, and expression.

**Outcomes:**

• Students can identify and explain the common linguistic principles that make language an indispensable medium for thought, communication, and expression.
• Students can analyze literary and nonliterary texts for the presence and operation of the linguistic principles of the English language.

4. **Goal:** To understand a variety of theoretical approaches to the study of language, literature, and culture and to develop the ability to employ that understanding in the study of language, literature, and culture.

**Outcomes:**

• Students can identify and explain major theoretical approaches to the study of language, literature, and culture.
• Students can demonstrate an ability to employ those approaches judiciously and appropriately in their study of language, literature, and culture.

5. **Goal:** To understand the craft of effective research, the various ways in which research problems are formulated and pursued in English studies, broadly conceived, and to develop the ability to employ this understanding in research projects.

**Outcomes:**

• Students can identify and explain the principles of effective research in English studies.
• Students can describe and explain how research problems are formulated and pursued in English studies.
• Students can formulate their own research projects employing these principles.

6. **Goal:** To understand what it means to read with critical attentiveness to elements of language, style, genre, and rhetorical occasion; and to develop an ability to employ this understanding effectively in interpreting literary and nonliterary texts and other cultural artifacts.

**Outcomes:**

• Students can identify elements of language, style, genre, and rhetorical occasion that may influence the reception and interpretation of literary and nonliterary texts and other cultural artifacts.
• Students can demonstrate an ability to interpret literary and nonliterary texts and other cultural artifacts using their knowledge of key elements of language, style, genre, and rhetorical occasion.

7. **Goal:** To understand what it means to write effectively in a variety of modes and genres suitable to the given rhetorical situation and to develop an ability to put this understanding into practice.

**Outcomes:**

• Students can identify and analyze a variety of modes and genres of writing.
• Students can identify and evaluate the rhetorical situation that makes a choice of mode or genre appropriate or suitable.
• Students can demonstrate an ability to write effectively in a variety of modes and genres suitable to the given rhetorical situation.

**Placement in English Composition Courses**

Regulations and procedures governing student placement in the composition-course sequence are summarized under Placement into English and Mathematics Courses (http://coursecat.isu.edu/undergraduate/academicinformation/placementintoenglishandmathematicscourses). Students should consult with the Director of Composition concerning applicability toward Objective 1 requirements of writing courses taken at other institutions.

**English Course Prerequisites and Standards**

Students must complete Objective 1 or its equivalent before enrolling in 2000-level ENGL courses. At least one semester of lower-division literature is prerequisite for 3000 and 4000-level literature courses. To enroll in a 4000-level course, students must have junior or senior standing. To graduate as an English major or with an English minor, a student must maintain at least a 2.25 grade point average in courses within the English curriculum. Some courses may have additional prerequisites.

**Philosophy Program**

The Philosophy Program offers courses on the history of philosophy, philosophical issues, and the cognitive skills required in philosophy. These offer students a deeper understanding of our past and our place in the world, as well as helping them to develop analytic and writing skills that are valuable in all disciplines. Students take either Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL 1101) or Introduction to Ethics (PHIL 1103) to partially meet Objective 4 of the General Education Requirements. The Philosophy Program offers a bachelor’s degree and a minor to our undergraduate students. After graduation, philosophy students are well prepared to enter law school or graduate degree programs, or to pursue careers that require strong analytical and writing skills.

**Mission and Goals**

The Philosophy Program provides students pursuing a liberal arts education training in the history of philosophy, philosophical issues, and the analytic skills required in philosophy. This training will provide students with strong analytical and writing skills, the ability to read philosophical texts critically, the ability to formulate and defend philosophical positions, and a grasp of the historical context and broader implications of philosophical positions.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Undergraduate Philosophy students will be able to write clear, organized, and grammatically correct prose.
2. Students will be able to read philosophical texts critically.
3. Students will be able to formulate a clear and substantive position regarding a major philosophical problem.
4. Students will be able to develop cogent arguments in support of that position, and to recognize and criticize the strongest arguments against it.
5. Students will be aware of major philosophers’ arguments relevant to that position.

6. Students will be aware of the larger historical and intellectual context of the problem addressed.

7. Students will be aware of the broader implications of the position embraced.

**Folklore Program**

Folklore is the dynamic, expressive culture that we learn in informal interactions with people we meet regularly, or that we learn through informal communication. The many traditional genres of folklore include the verbal arts, such as epic, ballad, folksong, folktale, legend, myth, joke, tall tale, riddle, and proverb. Newer genres include YouTube postings, urban legends, and digital memes. Folklore also includes customary and material forms, such as games, dances, modes of dress, folk architecture, and crafts such as chair making, blacksmithing, and many forms of fabric art.

Our program at Idaho State University has two focuses: in English courses we study oral literature: the way it is learned, transmitted, and performed, and its cultural and historical contexts. In Anthropology courses we study folklore as an expression of cultural diversity and examine the social functions of folklore within cultural groups. Students minoring in folklore may take courses from both departments to obtain a well-rounded understanding of folklore.

Knowledge and skills in folklore enhance a broad range of majors. Experience in folklore benefits students interested in continuing to graduate programs in folklore, history, anthropology, English, and sociology. Knowledge of folklore is helpful, too, in public history, museum, and oral history programs. Folklore courses enhance the knowledge of both elementary and secondary teachers and of those planning to do social work or to work in business or in the health-related professions.

**English and Philosophy Faculty** (http://coursecat.isu.edu/undergraduate/artsandletters/englishandphilosophy/faculty)

**English Courses** (http://coursecat.isu.edu/undergraduate/allcourses/engl)

**Philosophy Courses** (http://coursecat.isu.edu/undergraduate/allcourses/phil)

**American Studies Courses** (http://coursecat.isu.edu/undergraduate/allcourses/amst)