

STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT / state university of new york
brockport, new york 14420



Department of English

March 8, 1973

Dr. Martilu Puthoff, Chairperson
Graduate Policies Committee of the Faculty Senate
Physical Education Building

Dear Professor Puthoff:

The enclosed copy of proposed changes in the Master of Arts in English, approved by the Department of English on December 1, 1972, is submitted for your consideration and action. Our graduate policy remains the same except in the area of required courses and foreign language, and we hope your committee agrees with our policy changes which evolved from a semester of weekly meetings by our Graduate Committee and considerable discussion by the Department. If you would like me or Dr. Vincent Tollers, the Chairman of the English Graduate Committee, to amplify on these remarks, we will be happy to do so.

When our M.A. program was initiated six years ago, we anticipated that Brockport would shortly be the fifth university center and that the policies related to our M.A. would readily serve as a basis for the hoped-for Ph.D. program. We submit this new program on the premise that about 25% of our candidates who complete the M.A. continue on to a doctoral program and the majority of our program serves secondary school English teachers. In other words, we believe the enclosed policy changes bring our graduate program in harmony with the regional role of S.U.C. Brockport. If changes are approved, the Department of English will better serve the interest of its graduate candidates by offering a thirty hour Master of Arts degree which through minimum Departmental requirements meets educational and professional objectives the candidate can best determine.

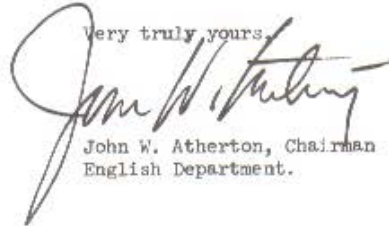
Turning now to the rationale behind our action, the two changes in course requirements enable the candidate to select more courses which he feels are relevant to his need. The doctoral bound student who feels he wants to take the specialized sub-discipline course, critical theory, will be able to take it on an elective basis. However, dropping this requirement will permit those interested in secondary education, the majority of the students, to choose one or more course which will best meet their professional objectives. The number of courses which meet the history of the language requirement will be expanded to include literature before 1500: Chaucer, Old and Middle English, or Beowulf. Since the subject matter of these courses is essentially language rather than literature, candidates should have the option of also selecting them. The new program of six required hours with only one specific course, bibliography, required gives the Department greater flexibility in curricular planning and gives candidates greater freedom in determining which courses meet their widely divergent educational and professional objectives.

May I also note that this action is consonant with our undergraduate policy of requiring twelve hours of survey in a thirty hour major. In both our undergraduate and graduate programs we have a strong advisement system. We believe this liberalization of required courses while at the same time making advice available is a sound, contemporary pedagogical philosophy.

The second change which the department approved is to drop the second semester, second year foreign language requirement. The Department simply does not subscribe to the theory that after four courses in a foreign language an individual is qualified to be part of the myth, the international community of polylingual scholars. Meanwhile, we continue to go on record supporting the language requirement for the Bachelor of Arts because we believe in the cultural value of learning about another people and their language. As we deliberated the foreign language issue, two points became clear. The first is that either the requirement should be eliminated or increased to six semesters or more so that the candidate is qualified to read with facility foreign literature and/or criticism. Most of our highly respected and diversely educated faculty freely acknowledge that they seldom, if ever, draw on the languages they were required to learn as they pursued higher degrees. Furthermore, the absence of even the most elementary collection of non-English criticism of English and American language and literature in Drake Memorial Library empirically supports the trend away from the utilization of a foreign language within our discipline. And it would be a downright falsification to assert that a candidate is more than rarely required to display his knowledge of a foreign language in the program in English at Brockport or any other respectable college or university. A useable training in a foreign language, then, is related not to a professor of English, but to one of comparative literature. Since our academic objective is to teach candidates to be generalists in English and American literature who will have little or no use for three years in a foreign language, we thought it would be more practical to drop the requirement of a foreign language. The second point which became clear is that the study of the English or American language is important to any M.A. in English. The valuable knowledge he acquires assists him to better understand and, if he chooses, to effectively teach literature and composition. For these reasons the department strongly believes that the study of language should be an integral part of our candidates' programs. We continue, then, to believe that the study of English or American language should be a requirement for the intermediate degree, but that the foreign language requirement should be eliminated. Our belief in this matter is widely held. Nationally recognized universities outside of New York State which do not require a foreign language proficiency for an M.A. in English include Chicago, Purdue, Michigan State, Missouri, Nebraska, Princeton, Case Western, Lehigh, and Iowa. In this state alone, for example, nine centers of learning have already dropped the foreign language requirement from their M.A. in English programs: Alfred University, City University of New York, Colgate, College of St. Rose, Fordham, Manhattan College, SUNY at Buffalo, SUNY at Stony Brook, and Syracuse University. (Graduate Programs and Admissions Manual, B Arts and Humanities, Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Services, 1972, pp.67-78). For those candidates who want a doctorate, we strongly recommend

for their protection that they write a thesis and pass a foreign language requirement. At the same time, however, we advise them that the language requirement is being dropped for doctoral candidates in this state at Fordham, SUNY Buffalo, and SUNY Stony Brook. Our proposed action makes it possible for Ph.D. bound candidates to show on their transcripts that they have completed a language requirement while at the same time ends the senseless coercion of the majority of our candidates, secondary school teachers and others, to jump the foreign language hurdle simply to be able to claim they have jumped it. Our Department believes that our admissions policy and level of instruction is in the most demanding tradition; if candidates can meet our educational objectives in material germane to our discipline, they deserve the degree.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John W. Atherton". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

John W. Atherton, Chairman
English Department.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Chairman: J.W. Atherton

Professors: Atherton, Bowman, Burke, Gemmett, Gerber, Jenks, Lynch,
Mouganis, O'Donnell, Ruf, Styza

Associate Professors: Burelbach, Fitz Gerald, Grade, Hale, Heyen,
Marchant, Murray

Assistant Professors: Anderson, Ingersoll, Maier, Napravnik, Perry
Piccione, Poulin, Rubin, Tollers, Wolf, Rich

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

This program is designed for students who have varied interests in a professional career in English: as an initial step toward the MFA or Ph.D. in English, or as a terminal degree for public school and junior college teachers.

Admission

Application for admission to degree candidacy (matriculation) is made to the department. An application for admission, a statement describing procedures, and information about other credentials involved in applying for admission are available on request from the Chairman of the Graduate Committee, Department of English.

The applicant should present an undergraduate major in English or its equivalent, with a grade point average of "B" in the major area. Applications from students who have had extensive training in academic fields closely related to English will be considered, but academic deficiencies may have to be made up. Ordinarily, applicants will be admitted to the program when they have:

1. Satisfactorily completed the form requesting admission to the program, and submission of letters of recommendation.
2. Achieved satisfactory scores on the verbal aptitude and advanced literature sections of the Graduate Record Examination.
3. Submitted all undergraduate and graduate transcripts.
4. Obtained the recommendation of the Graduate Committee of the English Department.

General Degree Requirements

The following standards govern the awarding of degrees:

1. Minimum hours of graduate credit: The Master of Arts degree requires a minimum of 30 semester hours of credit with a minimum grade-point average of "B" in

all graduate hours taken in the Department of English. A minimum of 21 hours must be taken at the 600 level and at least 18 hours must be completed after acceptance into the program. Upon department recommendation, a maximum of six semester hours taken outside the SUNY system may be approved as transfer credit. Degree requirements must be completed within five years of the end of the semester of admission to the degree program.

2. Foreign Language: All Master of Arts candidates who intend to continue in a Ph.D. program are strongly encouraged to take a reading proficiency test, based on either a literary article in an approved language administered through the English Department or an a standardized examination administered through the Educational Testing Service. The results of this examination will be recorded on the candidate's transcript in the form of a pass/fail grade. No college credit will be given for this test. Proficiency may also be demonstrated by successfully completing a second-semester, second-year course of an approved language.
3. Comprehensive Examination: The candidate must satisfactorily complete a Departmental examination in English and American literature. A more detailed description of the examination and copies of the reading list are available through the department.
4. Thesis: Each candidate must submit an individual project demonstrating mastery of an important segment of his subject. Two seminar papers written for two different instructors, recommended by them, and approved by a Board of Readers appointed by the Graduate Committee of the Department may be used. As an alternative, the candidate may submit a thesis approved by his thesis advisor and by the Graduate Committee of the Department. One to six hours credit may be granted for thesis research and writing. The individual project, whether thesis or seminar papers, must be submitted at least four weeks before Commencement to the Chairman of the Graduate Committee for departmental approval.

Advisement

Upon acceptance as a candidate for the Master of Arts in English, each candidate will be appointed an advisor from among the graduate faculty of the Department. Prior to this appointment, the Department will be happy to counsel students on an informal basis and to provide any available materials regarding the degree.

Financial Assistance

For candidates exhibiting superior promise, the Department has available a number of teaching assistantships. They currently carry a stipend of

\$2500--plus tuition waiver, and are granted on a competitive basis. Information may be obtained from the Department.

The Master of Arts Program

The following course is required of all degree candidates:

ENL 601 Bibliography and Methods of Research
3 semester hours

A course from the following area is required:

Literature Before 1500 or Language/Linguistics
3 semester hours

It is strongly recommended that each degree candidate's program of study include at least one course in each of the following areas:

British Literature 1500-1800
British Literature since 1800
American Literature to 1864
American Literature since 1864
3-12 semester hours

The remaining semester hours in a candidate's program of study will be electives in the Department and/or other appropriate departments, under advisement.