

UG Handbook

The Writing Seminars offers a liberal arts education with a concentration in writing. Writing Seminars majors take courses in the writing of fiction and poetry; seminars on the history and technique of poetry and prose; and literature courses with a focus on close reading of substantive works from the perspective of an author of creative work.

Students also study literature, philosophy, and history in other departments of the university. Finally, Writing Seminars majors are expected to demonstrate competency in a foreign language.

To Declare a Major

If you have decided to declare a Writing Seminars major, please follow these steps:

Fill out a Declare/Change Major form, available from the Registrar.

- Visit Yvonne Gobble in Gilman 81 during normal business hours.
- Ms. Gobble will sign your form and assign you an advisor.
- Return your filled in form to the Registrar.

Meeting Your Advisor

Once you have been declared a major and your information has been entered to ISIS, you are encouraged to visit your advisor. Regular office hours are best, and are posted outside of Gilman 81. If you're unable to go during office hours, please email your advisor to schedule an appointment. Your first visit needn't be a lengthy one. However, getting to know your advisor is very much to your advantage in your progress as a major. While the Writing Seminars major requirements are not complicated they are nuanced and your advisor can help you navigate.

Pre-Registration

Perhaps the most important advantage of your major status is the eligibility to participate in pre-registration, which is generally held a week or so before regular registration begins. Ms. Gobble will contact you by email with the schedule. Writing Seminars courses are much sought after. While every effort is made to provide our majors with the courses they need in the order that they are required, the responsibility of scheduling is ultimately on the individual student.

Requirements for the Major

- Introduction to Fiction and Poetry 1 & Introduction to Fiction and Poetry 2

- Four semesters of English literature. Expository Writing will not fulfill this requirement, though Introduction to Literary Studies is accepted. Students may fulfill some of these requirements with literature courses offered by other departments with advisor's approval
- Two semesters in the Department of Philosophy. It is strongly recommended that at least one be selected from either Philosophic Classics or the department's other introductory courses. Philosophy courses offered by other departments may be used with advisor's approval
- Two semesters in the Department of History. Majors are encouraged to take at least one semester in the History of Occidental Civilization. One course from History of Art or from History of Science and Technology maybe used to fulfill this requirement. Advisor's approval is required for courses coming from departments other than these mentioned
- Demonstrated competence in a foreign language through the intermediate level. Any language requirement waived by exam must be documented on official transcript or in the Advising Office before the checklist will be accepted
- Writing Seminars courses may not be used to fulfill any of these requirements

Advanced Work Within the Major

- One semester of Introduction to Fiction
- One semester of Introduction to Poetry
- One semester of fiction at the 300-400 level
- One semester of poetry at the 300-400 level
- Writing Seminars majors should take at least one Readings course to fulfill the intermediate fiction and poetry requirement. Preferably, the Readings course should be in the intended discipline of the advanced writing workshop
- One advanced writing workshop. This may be chosen from: the Advanced Fiction Workshop, the Advanced Poetry Workshop, or the Advanced Nonfiction Workshop
- Three elective semesters beyond IFP within the department. Any Writing Seminars 200-level or higher course may be used to fulfill this requirement

Internships

Many Writing Seminars majors choose to seek internships in journalism, publishing, and the arts during summers, during the semester, or both. Practicing Journalism is a one-credit independent course created to document the internship; often credit is required before an internship can be taken. The department will provide a letter indicating that credit will be received if required by the sponsor.

Recent internships have been taken at: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Rolling Stone*, *Esquire*, *Vogue*, *The New Yorker*, *CBS News*, Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, Ecco Press, Emily's List, *The View*, *Seventeen Magazine*, International Creative Management, Donna Karan, *The Today Show*, J. Walter Thompson, ICM

Agency, Wunderkind PR, *MSNBC/Hardball with Chris Matthews*, *The Village Voice*, NBC News, HBO, *Cosmopolitan*, *Shape*, *O: The Oprah Magazine*, *Vice*, *Baltimore Magazine*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Baltimore Style*, and *Baltimore City Paper*.

To register for Practicing Journalism please do the following:

- Fill out an Internship/Independent Work form, available from the Registrar.
 - Course Title: Practicing Journalism
 - AS 220.509 (fall)
 - AS 220.510 (spring)
 - AS 220.572 (intersession)
 - AS 220.594 (summer)
 - One credit internship
- Deliver the completed form to the DUS, Tristan Davies (Gilman 38F), or leave it in his departmental mailbox. He will forward it to the Registrar.
- Email Mr. Davies once halfway through the internship with an update.
- At the conclusion of the internship, provide him with the following information:
 - The number of hours completed in the internship. A minimum of 120 is recommended.
 - The name and contact information for the person you worked most closely with at the internship.
 - A brief description of your experience and whether you would recommend the internship to future JHU students.
- Mr. Davies will file your grade with the Registrar.

Study Abroad

The department encourages its majors to study abroad when practical. While traditionally students spend one semester enrolled at a foreign university, increasingly majors are taking advantage of summer opportunities or stays over the lengthy Intersession.

As a rule of thumb, one Writing Seminars elective will be accepted per semester abroad. Literature, history, and philosophy credits are also recognized from foreign study.

Either your advisor or Tristan Davies can help you with study abroad plans and sign the required forms.

Research Funding Opportunities and Independent Study

Writing Seminars majors often compete favorably for Provost's Undergraduate Research Fellowships, Dean's Undergraduate Research Fellowships, Azrael Fellowships, and Woodrow Wilson Fellowships.

Please consult the Krieger School website under “Research” for a comprehensive guide of funding available to Arts and Sciences students.

Writing Seminars majors may engage in a semester of independent study for credit toward the advanced requirement of the major.

Independent study programs are generally offered to advanced students who have either exhausted the coursework offered by the major or are engaged in a significant research project, such as a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship or a DURA or PURA grant.

Only full-time members of the faculty may supervise independent study projects.

If you are interested in exploring an independent study, contact a faculty member, preferably one with whom you have worked previously, with an outline of your projected project.

Guide to Seeking Departmental Honors in The Writing Seminars

If you believe that you are eligible for Writing Seminars departmental general honors (G.P.A. of 3.5 or higher in all major requirements exclusive of language courses), then please do the following:

1. Fill out an honors application sheet, available on the Academic Advising website.
2. Fill out an honors calculation sheet and calculate your departmental G.P.A.
3. Deliver the documents to Tristan Davies’s box in Gilman 81. He will sign and deliver the forms to the Registrar's Office.

The Learning Goals of The Writing Seminars Undergraduate Major

A Writing Seminars’ major should be able to:

- Analyze works of literature with an eye to form, voice, development, closure, conflict, structure, and ornament, as well as historical context
- Demonstrate competence in the formatting and presentation (verse line, stanza, rhythm, meter; narrative exposition, dialogue, argument) of his/her own original writing
- Possess critical capabilities in the evaluation of creative work-in-progress, and experience in the protocol of the workshop method
- Acquire the substance of a liberal-arts education through the distribution requirements in the major, including history, philosophy, and foreign language study

- Compose a portfolio of original writing (poems, stories or essays) that would meet the standards for application to MFA programs, but also serve as the foundation for careers in communication, law, teaching, or other fields where success is a function of skills in close analysis conveyed through lucid and intelligent writing.