English

To study English literature and language is to understand its power, its possibilities and its pleasures. As an English major at Illinois Wesleyan, you’ll examine writing past and present to discover its variety and complexity. You’ll learn to write with clarity and imagination.

Why English at Illinois Wesleyan?

• Our English program offers two tracks for majors: a concentration in literature and a concentration in writing.
• The literature track focuses on reading, research, critical analysis and speaking skills.
• The writing track links the study of literature to an emphasis on creative writing and journalism, with courses in writing fiction, poetry, the essay, news and news features.
• Opportunities for research and independent study are available and encouraged for qualified students in both the writing and literature concentrations.
• The student-run literary cooperative Tributaries and the campus chapter of the national English honors society Sigma Tau Delta foster a sense of community within and beyond our campus.
• The Department encourages students to broaden their experiences by studying abroad for a semester or during May Term.

Learning from a Quality Faculty

Faculty in the English Department put teaching first. Five of our nine full-time faculty have received the University’s highest teaching award, and another was named Student Senate Professor of the Year.

• Kathleen O’Gorman, Department Chair, Professor of English, Ph.D. — University of Notre Dame
  Her research interests are Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, Julio Cortázar, feminist theory, twentieth century women writers (Luisa Valenzuela, Clarice Lispector, Fay Weldon, etc.) and representations of the female in literature.

• Mary Ann Bushman, Associate Professor of English, Ph.D. — University of California-Berkeley
  Her research interests are Shakespeare, adaptations of Shakespeare’s work, the pedagogy of teaching Shakespeare, Renaissance poetry and drama and feminist theory. She currently directs IWU’s Writing Program.

• Wes Chapman, Associate Professor of English, Ph.D. — Cornell University
  He teaches courses in literary theory, British and American poetry, modernism, postmodernism, and science fiction. His current research interest is in cognitive approaches to literature.

A Sampling of Courses Offered by the English Department:

- Writing Fiction
- Writing Poetry
- Creative Non-Fiction
- Newswriting and Reporting
- Seminar in Journalism: Public Relations
- Science Fiction
- Travellers and Travel Liars
- Bad Girls
- Poetry Through Performance
- On the Bus: The Beat Writers
- American Drama: 1940 - Present
- Writing in the Third World
- Freaks!
- Medieval Literature
- Romantic Literature
- Slavery and the American Novel
- Modernism
- Literary Theories
- Shakespeare’s Comedies and Histories
- Shakespeare’s Tragedies and Romances
- James Joyce
- Senior Seminar

Recent May Term Courses Related to English:

- Exit, Pursued by a Bear
- Intricate Enchantment: On Science in Literature
- Survey of English Poems, 1500-1700
Although most students who become English majors do so because they love to read and to write, they are also preparing themselves for life after college. Most obviously, they learn to write well, an essential ability in any professional career and an increasing rare and prized commodity. And because fiction and poetry and drama, the materials we work with, are complex and messy, like life, English majors learn to use their whole minds: the analytic intelligence to be sure, but also intuition, emotion, and imagination. The world changes so quickly that few people can really know what their futures hold, but it’s a pretty safe bet that writing well and thinking well will be keys to any successful career.”

Dr. Kathleen O’Gorman
Department Chair