

In today's information-based society, the ability to use and analyze the spoken and written word has become critically important. English courses teach the skills of critical thinking, writing, and research, as well as the historical and theoretical frameworks through which literature can be read. As such, courses in English are valuable not only to those students majoring in English but also to any student, regardless of major, who plans to enter a professional field in the 21st century.

THE PROGRAM

The Department of English offers students a range of courses in English language, writing, and literature, focusing on the development of skills in independent inquiry and analysis, and training in literary and rhetorical traditions. This program is designed to deepen students' appreciation of language and literature, and prepare them to become astute analysts of culture and sophisticated writers.

THE MAJOR

The English major is designed to help students read for pleasure and understanding, write with skill and grace, appreciate diverse cultures and values, understand the relationship between art and life, discover the liberating qualities of the imagination, and prepare themselves for careers that require skill with the English language.

THE COURSES

Classes at VWU are small and interactive. English courses teach the skills of critical thinking, writing, and research, as well as the historical and theoretical frameworks through which literature can be read. Recent courses offered by the VWU English department range in subject matter from Shakespeare to zombies, metafiction to eco-poetry, war and conflict in 20th-century literature to heroes and monsters in Victorian literature, the history of the English language to creative writing, and science fiction to Harry Potter.

INTERNSHIPS/UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

English majors have many opportunities for internships. In recent years, our majors have completed internships with such organizations as the Space and Naval Warfare Command, the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, and the Marine Science Museum. As the culmination of the major, each VWU English major completes a senior capstone project based on that student's interests and passions. This extensive independent research or creative writing project allows each of our students to demonstrate their mastery of the skills needed to succeed after college. In addition to semester abroad programs, the department also offers a number of study away classes. Most recently, professors have taught classes traveling to Ireland, New York City, and Paris and Normandy. VWU offers substantial grants to help students take advantage of these opportunities.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Students who major in English develop the skills and flexibility that are increasingly necessary in today's workplace. Studying English helps prepare students for a variety of careers in business, industry, and government, as well as for careers focused more specifically on the use of language, such as writing, publishing, journalism, law, ministry, and teaching, and for graduate study.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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