PROFESSIONAL WRITING, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: Berks

Program Description

The major is intended to prepare students to write effectively in a variety of workplace and academic settings. Methods of instruction draw upon the strategies and techniques of practicing writers outside of the University, including workshops, peer conferencing, collaborative writing, portfolio preparation, and internships. At the same time, theory courses provide the necessary background to help students understand and appreciate the larger issues surrounding the writing and reading of texts.

As a liberal arts degree, the Professional Writing major is appropriate for students who wish to develop a set of applied communication skills to prepare for a wide range of professional positions or for graduate or professional schools. The degree differs from most current English majors in at least three ways:

1. a practical orientation prepares graduates for employment, in addition to postgraduate English studies;
2. a multidisciplinary focus integrates courses from the liberal arts, business, and information technology, and
3. a required internship ensures that students actively apply their skills.

What is Professional Writing?

If you enjoy expressing thoughts and ideas through the written word, the B.A. in Professional Writing may be the right degree for you. A degree in Professional Writing will prepare you to write effectively in a variety of workplace and academic settings. It involves the use of precise language to convey information in a way that is easily understood by its intended audience, and it may be used to inform, persuade, instruct, or encourage action. Employers seek graduates with effective writing skills, and the broad nature of this degree opens doors to a variety of careers and to graduate school.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You enjoy communicating thoughts, ideas, and concepts through the written word.
- You are interested in a degree that emphasizes writing and will provide skills that employers seek.
- You like the flexibility of a broad, liberal arts major that will prepare you to enter a variety of fields or to enter graduate school.

MORE INFORMATION (http://berks.psu.edu/ba-professional-writing)

Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have third-semester classification (http://www.registrar.psu.edu/registration/semester_classification.cfm).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-00: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major)

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Professional Writing, a minimum of 123 credits is required:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Arts Requirements</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements for the Major</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required.)

- Quantification (GQ): 6 credits
- Writing and Speaking (GWS): 9 credits

Knowledge Domains

- Arts (GA): 6 credits
- Health and Wellness (GHW): 3 credits
- Humanities (GH): 6 credits
- Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS): 6 credits
- Natural Sciences (GN): 9 credits

Integrative Studies (may also complete a Knowledge Domain requirement)

- Inter-Domain or Approved Linked Courses: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements
• United States Cultures: 3 credits
• International Cultures: 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum
3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits
A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work
Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition
The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

Foreign Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one foreign language. See the Placement Policy for Penn State Foreign Language Courses.

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student’s primary major; foreign language credits in this category must be in a second foreign language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language)

Other Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the General Education US/IL requirement.

3 of these 24 credits are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if foreign language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Requirements for the Major
A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44.

### Prescribed Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 211W</td>
<td>Introduction to Writing Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 417</td>
<td>The Editorial Process</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Courses

**Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 471</td>
<td>Rhetorical Traditions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 491</td>
<td>The Capstone Course in Professional Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 495</td>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rhetorical Theory**

Select one of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 472</td>
<td>Current Theories of Writing and Reading</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 473</td>
<td>Rhetorical Approaches to Discourse</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 474</td>
<td>Issues in Rhetoric and Composition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing for Publication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 260W</td>
<td>News Writing and Reporting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 215</td>
<td>Introduction to Article Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Workplace Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 418</td>
<td>Advanced Technical Writing and Editing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 419</td>
<td>Advanced Business Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Visual Design**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 420</td>
<td>Writing for the Web</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 480</td>
<td>Communication Design for Writers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Advertising and Public Relations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 320</td>
<td>Introduction to Advertising</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 370</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Creative Writing**

Select one of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 212</td>
<td>Introduction to Fiction Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 213</td>
<td>Introduction to Poetry Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 415</td>
<td>Advanced Nonfiction Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Writing Courses**

Select two of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAS 214</td>
<td>Speech Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 260W</td>
<td>News Writing and Reporting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 320</td>
<td>Introduction to Advertising</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 370</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 110</td>
<td>Newswriting Practicum</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 212</td>
<td>Introduction to Fiction Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 213</td>
<td>Introduction to Poetry Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 215</td>
<td>Introduction to Article Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 250</td>
<td>Peer Tutoring in Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 415</td>
<td>Advanced Nonfiction Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 416</td>
<td>Science Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 418</td>
<td>Advanced Technical Writing and Editing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 419</td>
<td>Advanced Business Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 420</td>
<td>Writing for the Web</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 421</td>
<td>Advanced Expository Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 472</td>
<td>Current Theories of Writing and Reading</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 473</td>
<td>Rhetorical Approaches to Discourse</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>ENGL 474</td>
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</table>

**Academic Advising**

The objectives of the university’s academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their
intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee’s unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information need to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy)

Berks
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Suggested Academic Plan
Berks Campus
The course series listed below provides only one of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an Academic Requirements or What If report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year
Fall
ENGL 15 or 30† 3
General Education Course (GQ)‡ 3
World Language Level 1 4
General Education Course 3
General Education Course 3
First-Year Seminar 1
17
Total Credits 17

First Year
Spring
CAS 100A or 100B† 3
General Education Course (GQ)‡ 3
World Language Level 2 4
General Education Course 3
General Education Course 3
16
Total Credits 16

Second Year
Fall
ENGL 211 (Course fulfills the Writing Across The Curriculum Requirement.)* 3
Professional Writing Categories Selection* 3
World Language Level 3 4
General Education Course 3
General Education Course 3
General Education Course (GHW) 1.5
17.5
Total Credits 17.5

Second Year
Spring
ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D‡ 3
Professional Writing Categories Selection* 3
General Education Course 3
General Education Course 3
General Education Course 3
General Education Course (GHW) 1.5
16.5
Total Credits 16.5

Third Year
Fall
ENGL 417* 3
Professional Writing Categories Selection* 3
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirement: Knowledge Domain 3
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirement: Knowledge Domain 3
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirement: Knowledge Domain 3
15
Total Credits 15

Third Year
Spring
ENGL 471* 3
Professional Writing Categories Selection* 3
Professional Writing Categories Selection* 3
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirement: Other Cultures 3
Elective 3
15
Total Credits 15

Fourth Year
Fall
ENGL 495* 3
Professional Writing Categories Selection* 3
Professional Writing Categories Selection* 3
Elective 3
Elective 3
15
Total Credits 15
Fourth Year

Spring Credits
ENGL 491* 3
Professional Writing Categories Selection* 3
Elective 3
Elective 3
Total Credits 12

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major
‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education
# Course is an Entrance to Major requirement
† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy University Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

GWS, GQ, GHW, GN, GA, GH, and GS are abbreviations used to identify General Education program courses. General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ) and Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS, and Integrative Studies). Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of ‘C’ or better.

Integrative Studies courses are required for the General Education program. N is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate an Inter-Domain course and Z is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate a Linked course.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student’s primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in Other Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as Other Cultures courses (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-other-cultures).

1 The following courses are offered Fall Semester only: ENGL 417.
2 The following courses are offered Spring Semester only: ENGL 202B, 471, 491.
3 For Professional Writing Categories Selection, consult advisor for list.

Career Paths

The Professional Writing degree provides an excellent academic foundation for students to hone their written communication skills. The flexible nature of the program allows graduates to enter a variety of career fields

Careers

The Professional Writing degree provides valuable written communication skills sought by employers in a wide variety of fields. Graduates will be well prepared for positions in media and publishing outlets as editors, news analysts, and reporters; in corporate settings as advertising copywriters, public relations specialists, and technical writers, and in a variety of academic settings.

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

The B.A. in Professional Writing also prepares students for graduate study in fields such as rhetoric and composition, journalism, creative writing, and other related programs, as well as business and law.

Contact

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