Program Learning Goals

1. Literary Knowledge Standards numbered 1-5 are designed primarily from a Literary Studies perspective. Students pursuing this and the Graduate Studies tracks through the English major are expected to realize fully the specific (lettered) Goal within these Standards. Students pursuing the Creative Writing track will be held to a standard of accomplishment in keeping with their coursework and with the Departmental purpose of integrating to the extent possible critical and creative approaches to literature.

   A. Possess broad familiarity with the principal works, authors, genres, and periods of British and American literature (and where relevant course work taken, alternatively defined traditions, e.g., women’s writing, postcolonial literature, etc.).

   B. Demonstrate in-depth understanding of specific texts drawn from the heritage referred to in Goal 1.A.

   C. Possess basic acquaintance with the principal critical approaches to literary study, e.g., formalist, historicist, psychological, feminist, etc., and with their implications for the understanding referred to in Goal 1.B.

2. Language in Literature

   A. Ascertain accurately the meanings of words, including primary and secondary, denotative and connotative, literal and figurative significations, in literary context.

   B. Identify and analyze the literary effects of common word sounds, especially in the language of poetry, such as rhyme, meter, alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc.

   C. Identify and analyze the literary effects of common rhetorical figures, such as image, simile, metaphor, personification, etc.

3. Interpretation

   A. Conduct close reading and textual analysis, making use of linguistic understanding (Goal 2) and such further critical concepts as plot, character, theme, narration, symbolism, structure and form, etc.

   B. Show awareness of and interpret persuasively complexities of textual meaning presented by such factors as irony, ambiguity, multiple levels of signification, etc.

   C. Bring to bear on textual interpretation such intertextual and contextual considerations as other works of literature, generic conventions, and biographical, historical, cultural, psychological, religious, etc., backgrounds.

4. Research and Presentation

   A. Access relevant and reliable professional criticism and sources of intertextual/contextual information in a range of print and electronic sources.

   B. Integrate research findings (Goal 4.A.) effectively into own work, and
document sources in accordance with MLA Style Guide.

C. Present information and ideas effectively in a range of media, e.g., written, oral, electronic, etc.

5. Communication

A. Speak clearly, correctly, and effectively; listen attentively and otherwise process information with comprehension.

B. Write clearly, correctly, and effectively, and demonstrate ability to conduct substantive revision and editing of own work.

C. Write effectively common forms of academic prose, including especially the critical essay, exhibiting an original interpretive idea as a thesis and supporting the thesis with sound reasoning, textual evidence, and (when appropriate) researched information.

6. Creative Writing  Standard 6 is designed primarily from a Creative Writing perspective. Students pursuing this track through the English major are expected to realize fully the specific (lettered) Goals within this Standard. Students pursuing the Literary Studies and Graduate Studies tracks will be held to a standard of accomplishment in keeping with their coursework and with the Departmental purpose of integrating to the extent possible creative and critical approaches to literature.

A. Write effectively, with a distinct voice(s) and/or style(s), and with a grasp of the relevant compositional elements, in at least several of the recognized genres of creative literature, e.g., poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, drama.

B. Analyze literary works from a craft perspective, with a special focus on the writer’s technique(s) and on key compositional elements (e.g., line, sound, and form; plot, characterization, and setting; dialogue and scene) of the genre under consideration.

C. Offer informed and constructive critiques of other students’ creative work, from both a critical (reader’s) and a craft (writer’s) perspective.

D. Publish and/or make professionally valid attempts to publish creative work in one or more of such venues as formal readings, “slams,” on-line media, and local/regional/national/international print publications.

7. Life Learning The Goals in this Standard are to be fully realized by all English majors.

A. Articulate aesthetic, emotional, and/or behavioral response to literature, and demonstrate commitment to reading and/or to writing literature outside classes and beyond college years.

B. Demonstrate ability to assess own critical and/or creative work, educational progress, and future plans relating to the field of English.

C. Articulate personal sense of the way(s) in which the study of English, meaning literature and/or creative writing, contributes to preparation for career, citizenship, and the enrichment of own and others’ lives.