INTRODUCTION

This guide describes the four culminating activities of the present English MA Program: Comprehensive Exam (ENGL 596, 0 units), Pedagogical-Portfolio Project (ENGL 599, 2 units), Journal-Article Thesis (ENGL 599, 2 units), and Thesis (ENGL 599, 5 units).

Despite obvious differences in page length and in the nature of research activity and the range and organization of content, the Pedagogical-Portfolio Project, the Journal-Article Thesis, and the Thesis have similar formal and procedural requirements. All three of these culminating activities will need the following: (1) an English faculty director; (2) a committee of three faculty members; (3) formal committee approval of a written project/thesis proposal; (4) formal approval by the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Letters to begin the project/thesis; (5) a narrative of some kind that is included or integrated into the final submission of the project/thesis. The “narrative” is similar in purpose to the project/thesis proposal and in some manner explains the significance, objectives, and methodology of the project/thesis and further offers a conclusion or a recommendation; and (6) formal committee approval of the entire project/thesis that will be finally submitted to JFK Library. Familiarity with and timely anticipation of these procedures and requirements at the beginning of the project/thesis will help avoid unnecessary delays in progress and facilitate completion of the MA Program.

The University Office of Graduate Studies and Research (GSR) and JFK Library are charged with ensuring that all projects and theses submitted by students subscribe to University policy and standards. Students intending to pursue the project/thesis should view the series of ten brief “Thesis Preparation Videos” offered by JFK Library on YouTube (search for “JFK Library Thesis” on YouTube). Students should also read pages 25-26 of the Graduate Student Handbook, a downloadable pdf available at the GSR website www.calstatela.edu/academic/aa/gsr.
ENGLISH MA CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

The English MA Program (45, 46, or 47 units) is completed with one of the following four culminating activities:

- **Comprehensive Exam** (ENGL 596, 0 units)
- **Pedagogical-Portfolio Project** (ENGL 599, 2 units)
- **Journal-Article Thesis** (ENGL 599, 2 units)
- **Thesis** (ENGL 599, 5 units)

These multiple pathways to completing the MA degree in English (further described and outlined below) are aligned with and at the forefront of the best practices recommended by the Modern Language Association, the governing professional body for the study of language and literature. They are also in full compliance with the language of Title V of the California Code of Regulations and university policy for master’s degree programs.

Students who have not yet begun the culminating activity listed on their official MA Program and would like to change their culminating activity may have two choices – namely, they may select a different culminating activity already within their program or, if in an older program (extant prior to Spring 2012), they may change to the current program (approved Spring 2012).

**NOTE:** Students cannot switch to the Comprehensive Exam if they have already taken an ENGL 599 or to the project/thesis if they have attempted the Comprehensive Exam. A change of culminating activity or degree program might require additional units and coursework. Students need to consult with the Graduate Adviser about any such change.

Newly matriculated students must complete the requirements of the Spring 2012 program, which offers all four culminating activities – Comprehensive Exam or Thesis (46 unit program) or Pedagogical-Portfolio Project or Journal-Article Thesis (47 unit program).

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

Students must complete coursework in the areas of specialization in which their culminating activity is grounded. The culminating activity will be supervised and assessed by faculty members with expertise in the chosen field.

Students must be able to work independently and competently. They must take responsibility for initiating and maintaining contact with the Graduate Adviser and their faculty advisers (if applicable) and for obtaining information about the approval and submission process and guidelines in a timely fashion. Students must produce work that is, in content, form, and style, of the highest quality.

Students with a culminating activity of the project/thesis must also comply with the procedural
and submission requirements established by the College of Arts and Letters, the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, and the University JFK Library. Successful submission compliance will require that students become familiar with information, directives, and deadlines provided by the University Library at the following general link:

http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/thesisprep.htm

At the beginning of the project/thesis, students should attend a workshop (see the link immediately above for workshop dates) and familiarize themselves with the requirements described in “Master’s Theses and Project Reports” (especially chapter 4). See the following sub-link:

http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/thesbk.htm

Early in the drafting of the project/thesis, students should become generally familiar with format and submission requirements, and consult with the assigned College of Arts and Letters Thesis Reviewer for specific questions. See the following link for Thesis Reviewer contact information:

http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/thesis-reviewers.htm

Students are expected to complete the culminating activity within two years after finishing their coursework. For more information on department and university deadlines and formats, see the Advisement Secretary (ET A638) or the Graduate Adviser.

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (ENGL 596, 0 units)**

The MA Comprehensive Exam in English can be taken in any one of the following exam areas (see required reading lists):

- **American Literature**: Beginnings to 1860; 1860-1914; or 1914 to present
- **British Literature**: Medieval; Renaissance; Restoration and Eighteenth Century; Nineteenth Century; or Twentieth Century
- **World Literature in Translation**: Classical; Middle Ages-1600; 1600-1800; 1800-1900; 1900-1945; or 1945-Present
- **Postcolonial and Anglophone Literatures**: Contemporary Period 1947-present
- **Composition, Rhetoric, and Language**

At least two quarters before they sit for the Comprehensive Exam, students must select their examination area and inform the Graduate Studies Committee of their choice.

Students will write two three-hour exams: one exam on a historical period selected from the list above and one exam on a specific text from the same historical period selected in advance by the Graduate Studies Committee in consultation with faculty members specializing in the period.
Students opting to take the Comprehensive Exam in the Rhetoric, Composition and Language area will write two three-hour exams: one exam derived from readings on the Rhetoric and Composition list and one exam derived from readings on the Language and Literacy list.

Students are allowed three attempts to pass each part of the Comprehensive Exam. NOTE: Once a Comprehensive Exam is attempted, students cannot make a program change to another culminating activity.

A passing exam will demonstrate a student’s ability to convey a deep understanding of a particular period or area and to develop sophisticated textual analyses.

THE PROJECT/THESIS

One expects an intellectual bridge between program coursework and the project/thesis. Notwithstanding, the culminating activity must progress substantially beyond any bridging coursework. The project/thesis has a formal beginning and end, from project/thesis proposal to final submission. Students should consult with the Graduate Adviser and their project/thesis faculty director about planning their culminating activity. Careful thought should be given to the strategic use of ENGL 599 units.

To begin a project/thesis, students must find an English faculty member who will agree to direct the project/thesis and also chair the project/thesis committee comprised of three faculty readers. The project/thesis committee and department chair must formally approve the proposed project/thesis and submit the signed form (GS 12) to the College of Arts and Letters for final approval by the Associate Dean before the project/thesis officially begins.

The submission formats of a project and of a thesis are similar. As with the thesis, the project will require a “narrative” for submission and approval. The project/thesis narrative will precede either the pedagogical portfolio or the journal article in its final form of submission. The 5-unit Thesis typically meets the narrative requirements with the introduction to the main work. The project/thesis narrative (explaining significance, objectives, methodology, and offering a conclusion or a recommendation) will likely have been foreshadowed in the justifying and explanatory language of the original project/thesis proposal. Students should submit their project/thesis narrative with their pedagogical portfolio or journal article to the project/thesis committee for final approval. Library submission of the Pedagogical-Portfolio Project and the Journal-Article Thesis will require other front matter (title page, table of contents, approval form GS 13, etc.).

PEDAGOGICAL-PORTFOLIO PROJECT (ENGL 599, 2 UNITS)

Students choosing the Pedagogical-Portfolio Project must possess a single subject credential in English or have completed at least one course that focuses on pedagogy in English studies (Engl
The pedagogical portfolio affords students the opportunity to apply and extend their studies by investigating issues related to teaching a specific area in English. By completing the portfolio, students will demonstrate the ways in which their graduate studies in English have prepared them to teach at the secondary school or community college level.

The portfolio may take either of two forms, each of which is described below. Each type of portfolio must be prefaced by a written abstract that details the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and conclusion or recommendation. Option A, Designing a Specific Course, requires students to conceptualize a course and develop corresponding pedagogical materials. Option B, Approaches to Teaching, requires three to four essays that explain how a specific text or cluster of texts should be taught and why.

Students will form a committee of three faculty members who will evaluate the portfolio as “passing” or “failing.” The committee chair must have expertise in the area in which the portfolio is grounded. There is no oral defense of the portfolio.

**Portfolio Project Option A, Designing a Specific Course**

The portfolio should represent how the student's MA studies inform a particular teaching philosophy and course proposal. In the portfolio, students must demonstrate critical analysis and advanced understanding of the subject as they address the following questions:

- Is the idea for the course fully developed and substantive?
- Is the scholarship informing the course relevant and effectively incorporated into audience-appropriate curricular materials?
- Do the portfolio materials evidence discipline-based teaching preparation?

Students opting to complete the pedagogical portfolio will consult with their faculty advisers to determine the scope of the project and the exact elements required for completion. The Pedagogical-Portfolio Project, Option A, will include, but is not limited to, the following items:

- a formal teaching philosophy that addresses current discipline-based pedagogical theory and practice
- a proposal for a course that the student has not yet taught. The proposal should reference scholarship and criticism that influence the shape of the course and should indicate how the course fits into the current structure of English studies, takes advantage of innovative teaching strategies, and engages the student audience
- an annotated syllabus and curriculum plan that include a course description and overview, student learning outcomes, suggested texts, assessment criteria, and rubrics. Each week of the course must include examples of key assignments, activities, presentations, and lecture notes or outlines. Each component of the syllabus and curriculum plan must be accompanied by a detailed narrative rationale
- an annotated bibliography that evidences the research related to and influencing the course
A thoughtfully assembled and thoroughly developed pedagogical portfolio will extend beyond fifteen pages in length. The written components of the portfolio may be accompanied by additional requirements to be determined by the student and advisory faculty members, such as the teaching of a lesson or class, the student’s observation of and reflection upon a class session, a recording of the student’s teaching, and/or the development of a technological apparatus to support the lesson plans. A successful pedagogical portfolio will effectively represent the student's MA coursework and demonstrate both the theories underlying the course and how those theories are developed into course content.

**Portfolio Project Option B, Approaches to Teaching**

These essays should be modeled upon those published in the “MLA Approaches to Teaching” series. The three to four essays in this portfolio could focus on texts in one particular historical field or area or cover a variety of texts and thus demonstrate the breadth of the student’s MA experience.

**JOURNAL-ARTICLE THESIS (ENGL 599, 2 UNITS)**

Compared to the Thesis, the Journal-Article Thesis is narrower in scope and has a preprofessional component in its analysis of scholarly journals in the field. It is not appropriate for creative writing projects. (NOTE: Catalog language refers to this culminating activity as “Thesis Option A.”)

Students will produce an original, analytical essay of 20-30 pages with potential for publication or further development later in a doctoral program. The essay could be either a thorough, substantive revision of a seminar paper or a new project.

Students must submit to their thesis committee a clear and concise proposal (minimally 3 pages). The proposal for the Journal-Article Thesis should include the following:

- an essay abstract clearly articulating the rationale for the topic and the overall argument of the essay and its scholarly significance in the field
- a concise description of the ways in which the new research essay departs from and/or builds upon the seminar paper, if applicable
- a works cited list of at least 10 relevant and current scholarly sources
- a preliminary list of journals to which the research essay could be submitted
- a detailed essay completion timeline

After the proposal is approved, the thesis committee will sign a form (GS 12) requesting approval of the project by the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Letters.

If a revision, the original, graded essay must be submitted with the final Journal-Article Thesis (for a comparative evaluation by the thesis committee). Students revising a seminar paper are, of
course, expected to reconceptualize and restructure their arguments as necessary, conduct additional research, and demonstrate the contribution their argument makes to the field.

The journal article must be accompanied by a list of 2-3 journals to which the student could submit the essay, along with a detailed, written justification of the journals chosen. This written justification shall be included with the thesis narrative (required for final submission) and be prefatory to the journal article. The structure and style of the essay should adhere to those of one of the selected professional journals.

Students will form a committee of three faculty members who will evaluate the complete Journal-Article Thesis (i.e., including prefatory materials) as “passing” or “failing.” The committee chair must have expertise in the area in which the journal article is grounded. There is no oral defense of the Journal-Article Thesis.

THESIS (ENGL 599, 5 UNITS)

The thesis may be in the areas of literature, of composition, rhetoric, and language, or of creative writing. (1) A thesis in literature should concentrate on such issues as the analysis of a text or body of texts, a literary genre, and/or the literary treatment of a theme or social development. (2) A thesis in composition, rhetoric, and language should focus on the analysis of pedagogical approaches to the teaching of writing and the scholarship supporting that pedagogy or the analysis of a rhetorical or linguistic feature present in a text or body of discourse. (3) A thesis in creative writing will present a body of original work by the student with a scholarly introduction of 10-15 pages that objectively describes, assesses, and places the original work within its literary and critical traditions. (NOTE: Catalog language refers to this culminating activity as “Thesis Option B.”)

The thesis in literature or in composition, rhetoric, and language should, with lucid and polished prose, demonstrate the student’s ability to analyze texts and their contexts, generate and prove a sophisticated and original argument, and situate that argument in existing critical conversations. Students writing the thesis in literature or in composition, rhetoric, and language must synthesize a wider range of texts and contextual materials than that analyzed in the Journal-Article Thesis. The thesis, whose length is determined by the subject, will generally range from 40-70 pages.

Thesis Proposal

Students must be advanced to candidacy before enrolling in the first unit of ENGL 599, which is used for preparation and approval of the thesis proposal. The thesis committee must approve the thesis proposal before students can begin the thesis and enroll in the other ENGL 599 units. Thesis topics must reflect the student’s field of specialization, as indicated by completion of coursework in this area. The format and length of the thesis proposal are to be determined in consultation with the thesis director. Proposals are generally 6-8 double-spaced pages of text, exclusive of the bibliography. Sample proposals are available from the English Department Graduate Adviser.
Proposals must demonstrate the student’s ability to generate, develop, and articulate an original argument; organize a substantive research project; locate salient primary and secondary sources; integrate sources effectively; and write clearly, persuasively, and accurately. Proposals must define the main lines of inquiry, explain the theoretical or critical methodology, and articulate the significance of the project. Proposals will not be approved unless they articulate an argument that is suitable for development as a thesis-length project. Creative writing proposals must indicate the literary/critical traditions in which the original work is grounded. Proposals must include a bibliography of approximately 15-20 sources; brief original annotations should demonstrate the student’s familiarity with these sources. Secondary sources should be recent (although earlier seminal studies may be included), peer-reviewed, and varied (ideally including books, essays in edited collections, and academic journal articles).

**Preparation and Submission of the Thesis**

It is recommended that thesis committees convene with or without students at least three times: (1) to respond to the initial proposal or concept, (2) to respond to a complete early draft and Works Cited list, and (3) to assess the final draft.

The thesis requires an oral defense. Students should provide committee members with individual copies of the final draft no later than Week 6 of the quarter in which they will defend the thesis. The defense should take place no later than Week 9 of the quarter in which the thesis is to be completed.

Early in the writing of the thesis, students should familiarize themselves with University submission requirements, attend workshops if necessary, and consult with the Thesis Reviewer of the College of Arts and Letters for specific questions.

**ARCHIVE COPY**

Though a digital copy of the project/thesis will be stored in JFK Library, the English Department also maintains its own archive. Students should provide a digital or hard copy for the archive of the English Department.

**ENGLISH FACULTY & RESEARCH INTERESTS**

**Benjamin Bateman**, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., University of Virginia) – Transatlantic modernisms, queer studies, literary theory, studies in popular culture

**Mary Bucci Bush**, Professor (D.A., Syracuse University) – Creative writing (fiction)

**Michael A. Calabrese**, Professor (Ph.D., University of Virginia) – Medieval literature, Chaucer, classical studies

**Roberto Cantú**, Professor (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles) – Latin-American and Mexican-American literatures, literary theory and criticism, Chicano film,
Mexican cultural history

**Hema Chari**, Professor (Ph. D., University of Southern California) – Twentieth-century British literature, postcolonial literature, film, gender studies

**Melvin B. Donalson**, Professor (Ph.D., Brown University) – American cinema, creative writing, ethnic literature, American popular culture

**Marilyn Elkins**, Emeritus Professor (Ph.D., University of North Carolina) – American literature, African-American literature, composition

**James M. Garrett**, Professor (Ph.D., University of Southern California) – British romanticism, British literature, critical theory, composition

**Linda Greenberg**, Professor (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles) – Ethnic American literature, twentieth-century American literature

**Christopher S. Harris**, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., Bowling Green State University, Ohio) – History of composition instruction, writing pedagogy, digital rhetorics, objectives-based writing assessment

**Michelle Hawley**, Professor (Ph.D., University of Chicago) – Victorian literature, children's literature, cultural studies, aesthetics

**Martin Huld**, Professor (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles) – Linguistics, history of the English language, language and culture

**Steven S. Jones**, Professor (Ph.D., University of California, Davis) – Folklore, children's literature

**Maria Karafilis**, Professor (Ph.D., University of Maryland) – American literature to 1900, theory of the novel

**Andrew Knighton**, Associate Professor (Ph.D., University of Minnesota) – American literature to 1900, cultural studies, critical theory, print culture, aesthetics

**Atef Laouyene**, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., University of Ottawa, Canada) – Postcolonial studies, Anglophone literatures, critical theory, Arab diaspora studies

**Jun Liu**, Professor (Ph.D., University of Massachusetts, Amherst) – Critical theory, twentieth-century American literature, American ethnic literature, nineteenth- and twentieth-century European literature, diasporic and postcolonial literature

**Caroline McManus**, Professor (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles) – Shakespeare, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature

**Ruben Quintero**, Professor (Ph.D., Harvard University) – Restoration and eighteenth-century British literature, satire

**Lauri Ramey**, Professor (Ph.D., University of Chicago) – Creative writing, lyric poetry and poetics, African-American literature, the intersection of critical and creative writing, modernism and postmodernism, Black British writing

**Bidhan Roy**, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., University of London) – Twentieth-century British and Anglophone literature, postcolonial theory

**Aaron Sonnenschein**, Assistant Professor (Ph.D., University of Southern California) – Linguistics, language and culture, grammar

**Alison Taufer**, Professor (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles) – Medieval and Renaissance drama, Shakespeare, Arthurian literature, sixteenth-century English prose