English BA Learning Outcomes for Literature Courses

1: Analysis and interpretation of evidence

Students in the English BA program will perform analysis and interpretation of evidence.

In literature papers, students will use textual evidence from close reading to defend an interpretive thesis, including locating the significance of chosen passages in the context of a larger work.

2: Application of theory

Students in the English BA program will use theory to inform their analysis and argumentation.

This theory may be literary, philosophical, cultural, psychological, political, economic, rhetorical, etc. in nature, and students will reference it explicitly in their writing, as, for example, an explicitly formulated Marxist analysis of the representation of class in a novel. This outcome does not pertain to general approaches that may have an unstated theoretical basis. For example, a focus on the passivity of female characters in a novel would not count for this outcome, unless feminist theory is an explicit topic of the paper as well.

3: Application of established methodologies of literary criticism

Students in the English BA program will use established methodologies of literary criticism.

This outcome pertains to the use of the discourse of literary criticism at a complex level, in regard to either: (a) specific approaches to interpretation that have established currency in the discipline, such as feminism and new historicism, but which do not involve the explicit theorization of learning outcome #2; and (b) terminology and techniques of formal analysis wielded in a more systematic and knowledgeable manner than the more general close reading that is covered by learning outcome #1.

4: Engagement with social and literary history

Students in the English BA program will engage with social and literary history.

While ideally we want students to have a sense of how social and literary history are reciprocal, this outcome may appear as engagement with either social history or literary history.

5: Engagement with genre and form

Students in the English BA program will engage with genre and form.

For literature papers, this outcome requires explicit uses of the terminology or concepts of genre or form, or creative imitations of a specific genre or form.

6: Effective writing

Students in the English BA program will demonstrate effective writing.

In literature courses, students will demonstrate the general skills of college-level exposition developed to some degree of sophistication, as evident in the clarity, precision, fluidity, and aptness of sentence-level grammar, mechanics, and word choice; as well as in higher-level structural flexibility of sentences and paragraphs.
7: Establishment of sound, applicable arguments

Students in the English BA program will establish sound, applicable arguments.

In literature courses, students will clearly articulate a substantive thesis, for which they will provide a logically reasoned and organized defense.

8: Relevant use of sources

Students in the English BA program will use sources beyond the one of primary focus to establish relevant support for their argumentation.

These sources may be assigned by an instructor specifically for an assignment, ones assigned earlier in the course, or ones the student knows from another course, in addition to those discovered through research.

9: Independent, relevant research

Students in the English BA program will conduct independent research to establish relevant support for their argumentation.

This outcome requires student-directed research, usually for assignments which explicitly require such research.

10: Documentation of sources

Students in the English BA program will document resources accurately, consistently, and fully.

This outcome extends to the documentation of all sources in any paper that requires documentation (that is, in more than just research papers).

11: Insight

Students in the English BA program will explore and render insight in argument, reasoning, and methodology.

12: Creativity and originality

Students in the English BA program will display creativity and originality in argument, reasoning, or methodology.