

April 25th, 2018

2018 Outcomes Assessment Report for the M.A. in English

This report is submitted by Professors James Ruppert, Terry Reilly and Sara Johnson on behalf of the English Department. We reviewed four graduates of the M. A. program for the last two years and the M.A. portion for two graduates of our MFA/MA program. Those materials included six master's theses and three seminar papers.

Program outcomes for the M.A. in English

1. Students should be able to situate literary texts in English within a broad historical and cultural context, recognize appropriate literary conventions, and interpret particular texts by means of close reading.
2. Students should have a broad understanding of the philosophy of literary studies, be able to recognize different theoretical frameworks, and be able to apply one or more theoretical frameworks to particular texts.
3. Students should be able to write clearly and engagingly about literature, and be able to produce sustained, coherent arguments at an appropriate level of sophistication.
4. Students should complete their courses of study in a rigorous and timely manner.
5. Students who are going on to work or further study in the field of English should be adequately prepared for the next step in their professional lives.
6. Students should consider their graduate program at UAF to be of a high quality.

The master's theses and seminar papers we read clearly demonstrated that students that students leaving the program have acquired the skills and knowledge as stated in Outcomes 1-3. These students completed their degrees in a timely fashion. We have some anecdotal information on what these graduates are doing now. One has entered the Ph.D. program at Washington State University and one is applying to teach at a private school in DC. A third is an adjunct at the Learning Center at CTC. We had no exit surveys to examine so we were limited in our attempt to evaluate Outcomes 5 and 6. As for the two graduates of the MFA/MA, one has entered a Ph.D. at the University of Illinois, and the other is working on campus for ASUAF.

The theses we read represent a normal spread of interests in our graduate students. Two were rhetorically oriented. One had an ESL focus. A fourth focused on an aspect of literary criticism and another adopted a post-colonial orientation. The last one was a literary analysis of an abstract poet. These subjects suggest a serious engagement with our graduate offerings and significant sophistication.

Over the last two years, out of a concern for our students finishing in a timely manner, the Department has instituted a number of changes designed to improve the assessment of student outcomes and to streamline the student's progress through our program. The Department held a town hall meeting with MA students where student expressed their interests in the program and

were introduced to faculty. The exit questionnaire is being revised. The Department moved the MA exam to September rather than February of their second year of study so as to facilitate better thesis quality and completion time, and it is creating a timetable for degree completion that students could follow. We also revised procedures for the comprehensive examination reading list so as to allow student input into the reading list.

The committee recommends that the department create a short exit interview during which time the student can fill out the exit survey. The committee believes that the department chair could conduct this. The committee must also convey students' frustration with the early submission deadlines that the dean has established.