

TIPS FOR ENGLISH MAJORS



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Here are some tips to keep in mind as you pursue your English studies:

1. Take your required literature courses as soon as possible. They will give you the literary, historical, and cultural backgrounds and contexts for more specialized and advanced seminars. They will also familiarize you with the type of writing expected in 300-level courses. Be sure you are clear on the required courses for your concentration.
2. See an advisor at least once each semester to make sure you are progressing satisfactorily, getting the courses you need, and fulfilling the specific requirements for your concentration. Most advisors post sign-up sheets in advance of their advising hours so that you don't have to wait around hoping to see someone. Advisors generally do not schedule appointments over the phone or by e-mail. It is essential always to bring a current transcript (available through CUNYfirst) when you come for advising.
3. Make it a point to take classes with full-time faculty. The Department web site has a listing of all full-time faculty and their specializations.
4. If you are interested in doing an independent study, choose a topic, write up a brief proposal and preliminary bibliography, and *then* approach a full-time faculty member with whom you would like to work. This should be done the semester before you plan to do the independent project.
5. Plan your graduation audit for *early* in the semester in which you plan to graduate. Department advisors work with you only on the Major/Minor graduation audit. For the General Education and Pluralism and Diversity audit, you must meet with an advisor in Student Services, on the 11th floor of the East building. This, too, should be done as early in the semester as possible. It's a good idea to go over your transcript with an advisor during the preceding semester so that you know what requirements you have yet to fulfill.
6. Be aware that each year the English Department awards almost \$30,000 in Prizes, Awards, and Scholarships for outstanding essays, fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction. The deadline is the last Monday in February, and the Awards competition is announced in November. Details are available on the Department web site and at the Department office.
7. Make sure that the Department always has a current e-mail address for you. We regularly send out notices of readings and other events, fellowship and scholarship opportunities, job opportunities, and other information important to our English majors. If you change your e-mail address, be sure to notify the Department office, and, please, check your Hunter e-mail regularly.
8. If you decide to change your concentration, you must file a revised Major Declaration form with an advisor.

9. If you plan to take summer courses at another institution or spend a semester abroad, see an advisor well in advance to make sure that the courses you plan to take can be applied to your major requirements.
10. Hunter no longer requires students to have a minor. If you choose to pursue one, you need to declare it with the department in which you intend to minor.
11. After taking 24 credits in English, qualifying students may take an Honors seminar (ENG 494) in order to receive Honors in English at graduation. If you have a GPA of 3.5 in the English major and an overall GPA of 2.8, then you are eligible to take this course. Students must obtain prior approval of the instructor to be permitted to register for the course.

If you plan to pursue graduate studies, or even think you might want to go to graduate (or professional) school, here are some important things to keep in mind as you pursue your undergraduate studies:

1. **Start early.** Begin to inquire about your field of interest no later than the winter of your junior year. Learn about the applicable degree possibilities and requirements in the discipline, including the differences between masters and doctoral programs, as well as the differences among schools offering the programs you're interested in. Check out school web sites to learn about: admissions requirements, including pre-requisites; required admissions exams, such as the GRE; financial aid possibilities; application deadlines; and the program's requirements.
2. **Take challenging upper-level courses in your intended field of study** and, if you are eligible, the honors seminar. Take as many courses as possible with full-time faculty. If possible, try to take an independent study with a full-time faculty member in your specific area of interest.
3. **Schedule an appointment with Professor Bobrow**, the undergraduate advisor for graduate school applications. He has materials to help get you started on the investigation and application process. Attend his Graduate School Application workshop, held each March. He also holds a Personal Statement workshop every October for students in the process of applying to graduate or professional schools. All of the other advisors can also discuss your graduate school and career goals with you.
4. **Learn about undergraduate fellowships at Hunter/CUNY** that provide research opportunities, graduate school application guidance,

admissions exam preparation, and, in some cases, a stipend. These include the Ronald McNair Fellowship, the Mellon Mays Minority Undergraduate Fellowship, and CUNY Pipeline. The Office of Student Services has a comprehensive Grants Guide; this is the best place to start researching scholarships, fellowships, and grants. Go to studentservices.hunter.cuny.edu/scholarships and follow the links to the Grants Guide. You should also consider making an appointment with a Scholarship Advisor in the Office of Student Services.

- 5. Learn about scholarships and prizes available to Hunter students for graduate studies.** The English Department offers several such competitive scholarships, prizes, and awards each year. There are also competitive college-wide scholarships and awards, as well as numerous national and local grants and scholarships, both public and private. See above reference to the Grants Guide, available at the Office of Student Services website.