Proposed Revisions to the English B.A.

Rationale:

The current English Major was instituted in 1994. The ‘new’ major was created to respond to important changes in the discipline of English: the displacement of the traditional canons of English and American literature, an increased attention to histories of non-canonical textual productions, a new and heightened concern with the conditions and practices of interpretation (theory), the re-situation of textual study within a more general semiotics.

As a response to and intervention in this conjuncture, the ‘new’ major was, for the most part, and as the department’s last self-study suggested, successful. There were, however, some unforeseen consequences to the changes enacted over a decade ago that the department is now in the position to understand and address. First, the new major, because of its Texts-Contexts-Theories distribution requirements, sacrificed a more developmental model of English education. With only three core requirements, the curriculum became, de facto, one of ‘special topics’. Second, given this situation, older literature and traditionally canonical literature, rather than being confronted with theory and non-canonical practices, were simply disappearing from the curriculum.

The proposed revisions to the English B.A. address these difficulties directly. First, by adding two new courses and renumbering a third, the core of the curriculum is extended and made more coherent and developmentally sound. Second, the two new seminars, organized around two crucial concepts of interpretive practice, Genre and Author, stage precisely the encounter of theory with earlier and canonical literature and with the ontological and epistemological categories that sustained this literature. Questions of genre and authorship both require a thought about and engagement with time and history. Genres are always oriented toward a past they both preserve and transform, authorship entails the situation of an actual life, biography. The seminars devoted to these questions mandate an interaction with earlier literature without naively or cynically re-instating a canon so many of us fought long and hard to contest.

The revised major (see attached chart), then, adds two courses to the required core while keeping the total number of courses the same. Since the new core extends the theoretical orientation of the major, the number of required Theories courses is reduced from two to one. Since the new core also expands the historical scope of the major, the requirement of one “either Texts or Contexts” course is also eliminated. In addition, Eng 366, Literary Criticism is renumbered in order to make explicit its place in the core, optimally after the Sophomore Seminar and before the Junior Seminar.
**Proposed Revisions to English Major--B.A.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Requirements</th>
<th>New Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eng 204, Writing About Literature</td>
<td>Eng 204, Writing About Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 366, Literary Criticism</td>
<td>Eng 265, Sophomore Seminar, Studies in Genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 465, Seminar in Advanced Literary Studies</td>
<td>Eng 304, Literary Criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Texts Course</td>
<td>2 Texts Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Contexts Courses</td>
<td>2 Contexts Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Texts or Contexts</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 Theories Course</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Theories Courses</td>
<td>2 Electives (at least one at the 300 or 400 level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Electives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ENG 265, ucc approved, 11/8/06
ENG 304, ucc approved, 5/2/07
ENG 365, ucc approved, 5/2/07
New Catalogue Copy

English Major--B.A.  36cr
A.  Core Requirements*  30cr
Eng 204, Writing About Literature  3
Eng 265, Sophomore Seminar, Studies in Genre  3
Eng 304, Literary Criticism  3
Eng 365, Junior Seminar, Author Studies  3
Eng 465, Seminar in Advanced Literary Studies  3
Two TEXT courses  6
Two CONTEXT courses  6
One THEORIES course  3
B.  Electives  6
Two Eng or Crw courses, one of which must be at the 300- or 400-level.
C.  Cognate Requirements
None
*At least 21cr of the core requirements must be 300- or 400-level courses.