

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH BY PORTFOLIO

The comprehensive examination in English requires you to demonstrate your knowledge of British and American literature in the major genres of prose fiction, dramatic literature, and poetry, and in periods both pre- and post-1800.

To fulfill this requirement, you must submit a portfolio of 5-6 college English essays that represent your knowledge of American and British literature in the required genres and in both earlier and later periods. You're free to include an essay analyzing film, as long as the essay was written for a college English class, and your portfolio includes essays on prose fiction, dramatic literature, and poetry.

The majority of essays you submit for the portfolio must have been written for Wells English courses (excluding ENGL 401). If you had British literature courses in an affiliated off-campus study program, such as ASE Bath or the University of Stirling, or transferred in English literature courses from prior college work, you may include one or two essays from these courses. The copies you submit may be the originals, with faculty comment, or may be clean copies. In either case, you may not revise the essays. We encourage you to meet with your English faculty advisor to discuss which essays to include in your portfolio.

The portfolio must be prefaced by a 5-6 page introductory essay in which you: 1) indicate the course and context for the essays; 2) explain how each essay demonstrates your knowledge of a particular genre and period in American or British literature; and 3) reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of your approach, methods of analysis, and writing in each essay. Especially with essays written earlier in your college career, consider how your approach to or knowledge of a text or topic might differ now. In your conclusion, indicate how your writing and research in English and American literature has helped you prepare for life after college, both professional and personal.