When you choose English as your major at the U of M, you’ll study literature and other forms of verbal expression, literary history and criticism, critical theory, linguistics, and creative writing. While studying English you can explore a wide range of discourses including poetry, drama, fiction, film, popular culture, and electronic media. You will examine the cultural, social, political, and economic contexts that condition a variety of texts.

This major includes an extensive amount of writing as you learn to express yourself effectively, both orally and in writing. You’ll gain practical insight into the words you speak, read, and write.

The English department supports an engaged, civic-oriented curriculum and teaches the critical skills of reading and writing in the context of community involvement and real public spheres by incorporating community and service-learning components into literature classes.

The College of Liberal Arts Advantage: More Than a Major

When you study English at the University of Minnesota, you gain the added advantage of a College of Liberal Arts education. At CLA, the liberal arts mean you get more than just a degree in one major or another; it means you will be exposed to different areas of study, to different ways of thinking and learning. In fact, the liberal arts teach you how to learn—how to ask the right questions, how to problem solve, and how to innovate. The liberal arts highlight the complexities of our world, because here at CLA you will study not just, say, politics or art but also
where politics and art intersect, where science and ethics intersect, where economics and the environment intersect.

Meet Our Students

In both of her majors, Finance and English, Shirin uncovers and analyzes stories. She writes, "I have a curious mind that is always yearning to learn more about art, music, business, science—all through the study of English literature."

Read more about Shirin's story, and learn more about our undergraduate program.

Ella worked as an ad editor for CLAgency and recommends English's "Topics" courses, like the one she took on horror literature. She writes, "The department offers countless classes spanning a spectrum of topics that help hone skills in writing, critical thinking, and even public speaking (in discussion-based classes). These are valuable classes to anyone—no matter their degree or college."

Read more about Ella's story.
Student Experiences

Internships: Gain Valuable Experience in the Twin Cities and Beyond

Did you know? CLA Career Services has its very own internship reflection course! Students taking an internship can use this course to reflect on ways that their work experience is preparing them for successful careers - and receive credit for the work.

Learning Abroad Options in English: Prepare to Lead in a Global Economy

“Study abroad helps you experience literature and writing in wholly new and different ways. Exploring books and exploring the world are related processes, and no education is really complete without opportunities to do both.”
—Josephine Lee, Professor, Department of English

Learn more about study abroad for English majors.

Undergraduate Research: Turn Curiosity into New Knowledge

The department offers students opportunities to research alongside faculty. Through the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), students receive a scholarship while pursuing a research project with a faculty mentor; in addition, undergraduate honors students research and work with faculty members as part of the honors thesis.

Student Organizations: Find Friends and Grow as a Leader

- Fellowship of Undergraduate Students in English (FUSE)
- Magazine Club
- MinnProv
- Radio K
- SPEAK

Meet Our Faculty
Associate Professor Lois Cucullu, who retired in Spring 2019, designed and taught fresh and tantalizingly titled courses for University of Minnesota undergraduates for 20 years: from “‘Spy-Fi’: The Rise of British Espionage Fiction” to “Modernism and the Metropolitan Novel,” and from “Monsters, Sleuths, and Femme Fatales: The Cult of Modern Literary Celebrity” to “The London Metropolis from Boz to Sherlock Holmes.”

Read more about Professor Cucullu's work.

Meet Our Alumni

CLA Graduates: Successful Careers and Purposeful Lives

CLA graduates succeed in many different careers — law, health care, medicine, business, government, teaching, advertising, arts and entertainment, international relations, and more — precisely because they understand how to navigate a complex and interconnected world. As our alumni explain below, “Being a good employee means being curious, and continuing to evolve, and learn, and educate yourself, and I can think of no stronger foundation for doing that than a liberal arts education.

“An education in the liberal arts is a springboard to lifelong career success”

-- Dean John Coleman
You might also explore

[Link to Journalism and Mass Communication]
[Link to Communication Studies]

Associated Careers

Adult Educators; Copy Editors; Copywriters; Editors; News Analysts, Reporters, and Correspondents; Public Relations Specialists; Technical Writers; Writers

Admission Information

FRESHMAN: [Link to Admission information]

TRANSFER STUDENTS: [Link to Requirements for the College of Liberal Arts]

• Did you know? CLA Transfer Advising has created an official "transfer guide" for a number of degree programs, including English, to help you determine which credits will transfer, and how.
Beyond admission, if you have questions about transferring, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) has transfer advisors to help. Please feel free to contact them about any of the topics below!

- Course plans before transferring
- Estimated time to graduation
- Career preparation in CLA
- Getting ready for orientation, if admitted
- Connecting with major/minor departments