ABOUT THE PROGRAM

In addition to being inherently pleasurable and intellectually exciting, majoring or minoring in English helps develop important skills. English students learn how to read carefully and closely, write skillfully and stylishly, and argue analytically and critically. Students study not only poetry and prose, but also films, journalism, television and the Internet. Graduates of the English department at Brandeis have gone on to become scientists, businesspeople, professors, lawyers, filmmakers, television producers, psychologists, fiction writers, poets, literary agents and social activists.

What makes the program distinctive?

The English department is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in both scholarship and teaching. The members of the department have remarkably diverse interests and teach courses that range from the origins of English literature to contemporary best-sellers. The department is also committed to the study of film and new media and technologies, as well as Anglophone literature in its global context.

FAST FACTS

- **Current number of majors and minors:** 80
- **Number of faculty:** 20
- **Can you minor in this program?** Yes
- **Emphasis within the major:** American and British literature, Anglophone literature, cultural and media studies, gender and sexuality, literary theory, modernism, Renaissance literature
- **Popular second major:** creative writing
- **Website:** brandeis.edu/departments/english
ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

Course offerings
The English major requirements have been designed to encourage the maximum flexibility in choosing classes that most interest you. As a major, you will choose from courses and topics that span geography, history and genre. Our recent offerings include classes such as “Bollywood,” “American Gothic Romantic Fiction,” “Love Poetry” and “Sex and Cinema.”

The Mandel Center for the Humanities
Ramie Targoff, a member of the English department, is also the director of the Mandel Center for the Humanities. This exciting center offers interdisciplinary undergraduate courses that attract students from all majors in the humanities and beyond. The center also hosts local, national and international conferences and events.

Our faculty
English majors have the opportunity to study diverse interests with our world-class faculty, who actively research issues throughout literary history, from Medieval to contemporary texts. Our faculty members also teach courses in other programs, such as African and Afro-American studies, film, television and interactive media studies, South Asian studies, and women’s, gender and sexuality studies.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Events
From presentations by visiting professors to the School of Night fiction and poetry reading series, there’s always something going on in the English department. Events are posted on our webpage as they are announced, and majors receive notifications of new English department events through the English majors listserv.

Study abroad
English majors and minors have the opportunity to spend a summer or semester studying in another country. University College in London and the University of Melbourne have been favorite choices in the past.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Faculty awards
Several faculty members have won prestigious fellowships recently. Ulka Anjaria received an ACLS/Charles A. Ryskamp Research Fellowship; Dawn Skorczewski was a Fulbright Scholar in Amsterdam; and Ramie Targoff received a Guggenheim Fellowship.

Faculty publications
Recent faculty publications include John Burt’s “Lincoln’s Tragic Pragmatism” (Harvard University Press); Caren Irr’s “Toward the Geopolitical Novel: U.S. Fiction in the Twenty-First Century” (Columbia University Press); and David Sherman’s “In a Strange Room: Modernism’s Corpses and Mortal Obligation” (Oxford University Press).

AFTER BRANDEIS

Julia Tejblum ’08
Tejblum, currently completing an English PhD at Harvard, previously worked in the College Division of W.W. Norton & Co. designing and maintaining a website and working alongside editors to revise and market titles such as “The Norton Anthology of English Literature,” as well as textbooks from every discipline.

Ha Jin, PhD’93
Known for his literature on the People’s Republic of China, Jin is a bestselling novelist and poet. Recent books include “Nanjing Requiem” and “A Good Fall.” His novel “Waiting” received the National Book Award in 1999.

Deniz Cordell ’07
Cordell works as a writer, composer and musical director. He has provided liner notes for releases of classic film music for record labels and musically directed shows in the New Hampshire area and in New York City, and he has written several scripts for the award-winning Colonial Radio Theatre on the Air.

Diverse career fields
Other English alumni include Deborah Bial ’87, founder and president of the Posse Foundation, an education access nonprofit; Michael Ratner ’65, president of the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York City; Marshall Herskovitz ’73, a director, producer and screenwriter whose work includes “The Last Samurai” and “Traffic”; and Margo Jefferson ’68, a Pulitzer Prize-winning critic-at-large for The New York Times.

Professor William Flesch, who specializes in Renaissance literature, makes a point of getting students in his classroom to argue with him. “If you agree with everything I’m saying, I’ve failed,” he says.

Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Department, Brandeis University

Photo by Ken Schles

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