Williams College Department of English
Statement of Learning Objectives

All students majoring in English at Williams will:

•   Develop their proficiency in the art and technique of writing essays on literature starting with a writing-intensive Gateway course.

•   Be introduced to the basic issues of critical methodology and historical approaches to literature by way of a Gateway course.

•   Engage issues of critical method explicitly in a Criticism course that either explores a range of critical approaches or focuses on a particular method, critic, or theorist.

•   Be introduced to the traditions and problems of literary history by way of a course centering on literature in English before 1800.

•   Expand their knowledge of the traditions and problems of literary history by way of a second course centering on literature before 1900, and a third course centering on historical issues from any period.

In addition, all students upon declaring the English major write a Major Plan, and meet with an adviser at that time and every year thereafter in their careers as majors, to identify ways of deepening and broadening their knowledge of literature in English. Students are encouraged to:

•   Center their interest on a genre, period, national tradition, or cultural tradition, and build their expertise in literature outward from there.

•   Sample courses in literature in English from many genres, periods, and diverse cultures.

•   Take courses in creative writing in any of its genres.
Majors may:

•   Pursue interdisciplinary interests by choosing among our many cross-listed courses, double majoring, or taking a course in a foreign literature as an elective.

•   Prepare for graduate work in literature by way of the honors program in criticism or creative writing; or by selection to the Class of '60 Scholars, whose annual program includes seminars with distinguished visitors in criticism or creative writing.