

## CURRICULUM CHANGE INTRODUCTION (May 31, 2021)

Dear English Majors, Minors, and Intended Students,

I hope this message finds you all enjoying a good summer term, whether you're taking a slate of classes or just trying to carve out a little time to relax. For those of you who haven't met me, I'm David Coley, the Undergraduate Chair of the SFU English Department. I'm writing this message—the first of several that you'll receive from me over the summer term—to introduce you to some exciting changes that will be coming to the Department this Fall. These changes will likely affect you whether you're an English major, an English minor, or just a student interested in taking an English course, so please take the time to read this message with care.

As some of you might have heard, the English Department has been steadily working to revise and update its courses and to streamline its major, minors, and certificate programs. There are several reasons for these changes, and paramount among them are concerns that we've regularly heard from *you* over the past few years: that the distribution requirements for our major are too rigid and complicated; that onerous course prerequisites can make upper-level courses hard to get into; and that our classes themselves don't always reflect the diversity and excitement of the field. Over my two years as Undergrad Chair, I've had many conversations with frustrated students who couldn't get into specific courses they needed to graduate or who were shut out of that *one* 200-level course they needed for their major. I've also heard from students who have noted the preponderance of “traditional” period-based courses in our curriculum and have wondered why we didn't have more courses that overtly addressed issues such as race, gender, environmental justice, and so forth. These conversations and many others have gone into the work that the English Department has done to develop a new curriculum, one that we feel will make our department a more vibrant and more inviting place to study.

So what's new? Well, a lot actually. In this message, I want to give a brief introduction to the structure and requirements of the revised English major, some of the changes you'll see in our course offerings, and a few other important details. As the Summer term progresses, I'll follow this overview with more in-depth discussions of each of these topics, so by the time the Fall rolls around there won't be any surprises. We will also be holding a few Zoom information sessions (more on those below) so that you can ask any questions you have in person and get immediate answers. And as always, if you have individual questions or concerns, please feel free to get in touch with me, and I'll do my best to answer.

First, and most important, **I want to assure you that everything you've done so far—whatever English courses, prerequisites, and requirements you've taken with us—will still count toward your degree.** No one will lose *any* progress toward completing their major, minor, or certificate because of these curriculum changes. In fact, we think you'll find things much easier to manage once these changes take effect. Here are a few of the structural changes that you'll see in the new curriculum.

- **No More Course-Based Prerequisites:** With a *very* few exceptions, entry into upper-division courses will no longer be based on specific course numbers (e.g. you *need* to take ENGL 304 or 306 in order to get into ENGL 404). **Starting in Fall 2021, almost all**

**course prerequisites will instead be based on credit thresholds (e.g. you will need 12 credits or 2 100-division classes to enroll in English 202).**

- **Fewer Area Requirements:** Right now, English has certain groups of courses at both the lower- and upper-division that are required for the major—one medieval or Renaissance 200-level course, one 18<sup>th</sup>- or 19<sup>th</sup>-century 200-level course, two pre-1800 upper-division courses, and so forth. **Starting this Fall, the only remaining area requirement will be one upper-level course in Canadian or Indigenous Literature.**
- **A Simplified Honours Program:** As with the English major, the structure of the honours program will be streamlined to minimize area requirements and to reduce barriers to entry and completion.

I'll be providing a more thorough description of these program changes soon, but again, what's most important for you to keep in mind is that *all* of the work you've done so far and *all* of the courses you've taken to this point will still count toward your major and your SFU degree. Some of you might even find yourself *ahead* of where you thought you were because the area requirements for the major have been loosened. If you have any specific questions about this, please be patient, and know that I'll be sending out much more detail in the coming weeks.

Second, you will see significant changes in our individual courses when SFU publishes its Fall 2021 course calendar. We've developed a whole bunch of new courses that we've never offered before, and we've significantly restructured or even deleted many of the old ones. Currently, most of the courses in the Department are based on specific time periods. Speaking as a medievalist, for instance, I regularly teach ENGL 201 ("Medieval Literature"), ENGL 304 ("Studies in Medieval Literature"), and ENGL 404 ("Topics in Medieval Literature"); similar series of courses exist in other time periods. But while these traditional periods are important, they are not the only way that we organize knowledge in the discipline, nor are they necessarily the way that you might find most interesting. For that reason, we have replaced many of our period-based courses with topical ones, especially at the 200- and 400-levels. Starting in Fall 2021 then, you'll have the opportunity to take lower-division courses like ENGL 209 ("Race, Borders, Empire"), ENGL 202 ("The Environmental Imagination") and ENGL 211 ("The Place of the Past"), as well as 400-level seminars like ENGL 415W ("Seminar in Media, Culture, and Performance") ENGL 417W ("Seminar in Gender, Sexuality, and Literature"), and ENGL 443W ("Seminar in Literatures of Diaspora and Migration"). And for those of you who still want to take courses in more traditional areas, we've maintained and refined courses at the 300-level like ENGL 304 ("The Medieval World"), ENGL 312 ("Shakespeare and the Stage: 1570-1642"), and ENGL 341 ("Modern and Contemporary British Literature"), as well as culturally and nationally organized courses like ENGL 345 ("American Literatures"), ENGL 355 ("Canadian Literatures"), ENGL 431W ("Seminar in Indigenous Literature"). I've attached a full course list to this letter, and I'll have more to say about specifics soon.

As I mentioned above, we will be holding several information sessions over Zoom later this Summer. The first session will be on Monday, **June 21**, and we'll hold follow-up sessions on Tuesday, **July 6**; and Wednesday, **August 4**. (And don't worry too much if you can't make these sessions; we'll record the first one and make it available for everyone to view online.)

Thanks for bearing with such a long message. There's a lot of information here, and there's more information to come. What I hope you'll take away from this, however, is that the Fall will begin an exciting time for English students and professors alike. As we look forward to coming back to campus and settling into in-person classes once more, we can also look forward to a slate of inventive and relevant new courses, a more streamlined and engaging major, and a rejuvenated and revived English Department. I'm excited about what's ahead, and I hope you will be too.

I'll be in touch in a few weeks with more information, and I look forward to launching the new curriculum with you all in a few short months.

Best,  
David

## SFU ENGLISH COURSES (New and Significantly Revised Courses in Bold)

ENGL 111W – Literary Classics in English (3)  
ENGL 112W – Literature Now (3)  
ENGL 113W – Literature and Performance (3)  
ENGL 114W – Language and Purpose (3)  
ENGL 115W – Literature and Culture (3)  
ENGL 199W – Writing to Persuade (3)

**ENGL 202 – The Environmental Imagination (3)**  
**ENGL 204 – Reading Sexuality and Gender (3)**  
**ENGL 209 – Race, Borders, Empire (3)**  
**ENGL 210 – Reading and Writing Identities (3)**  
**ENGL 211 – The Place of the Past (3)**  
**ENGL 213 – Reading Across Media (3)**  
ENGL 214 – History and Principles of Rhetoric (3)  
ENGL 216 – History and Principles of Literary Criticism (3)  
ENGL 234 – Metrics and Prosody (3)  
ENGL 272 – Creative Reading (3)

ENGL 300 – Old English (4)  
**ENGL 304 – The Medieval World (4)**  
**ENGL 310 – Early Modern Words and Worlds (4)**  
**ENGL 312 – Shakespeare and the Stage: 1570 – 1642 (4)**  
**ENGL 320 – The Long 18th Century and the Romantic Era (4)**  
**ENGL 330 – The Long Nineteenth Century (4)**  
**ENGL 341 – Modern and Contemporary British Literature (4)**  
**ENGL 345 – American Literatures (4)**  
**ENGL 355 – Canadian Literatures (4)**  
ENGL 360 – Popular Writing by Indigenous Authors (4)  
**ENGL 361 – Diaspora Literatures in English (4)**  
**ENGL 362 – Transnational Literatures in English (4)**  
**ENGL 363 – Studies in Media Cultures (4)**  
ENGL 364 – Literary Criticism: History, Theory, and Practice (4)  
ENGL 371 – Writing: Theory and Practice (4)

ENGL 372 – Creative Writing I: Poetry (4)  
ENGL 374 – Creative Writing II: Fiction (4)  
ENGL 375 – Studies in Rhetoric (4)  
ENGL 376 – Special Studies (4)  
ENGL 377 – Field School I (4)  
ENGL 378 – Field School II (4)  
ENGL 383 – Studies in Popular Literature and Culture (4)  
ENGL 385 – Across Time, Across Space (4)  
ENGL 387 – Studies in Children's Literature (4)  
ENGL 398 – Major Authors for Non-Majors (4)

ENGL 400W – Seminar in Advanced Old English (4)  
**ENGL 411W – Seminar in Literature and Race (4)**  
**ENGL 413W – Seminar in Literature and Environment (4)**  
**ENGL 414W – Seminar in Literature and History (4)**  
**ENGL 415W – Seminar in Media, Culture, and Performance (4)**  
**ENGL 417W – Seminar in Gender, Sexuality, and Literature (4)**  
ENGL 418W – Seminar in Critical Theory (4)  
ENGL 431W – Seminar in Indigenous Literature (4)  
ENGL 432W – Seminar in Canadian Literature (4)  
ENGL 433W – Seminar in British Literature (4)  
ENGL 437W – Seminar in American Literature (4)  
ENGL 439W – Seminar in World Literatures in English (4)  
**ENGL 443W – Seminar in Lit. of Diaspora and Migration (4)**  
ENGL 470W – Seminar in the English Language (4)  
ENGL 472W – Seminar in Advanced Creative Writing (4)  
ENGL 474W – Seminar in North American Poetry and Poetics (4)  
ENGL 475W – Seminar in Rhetoric (4)  
ENGL 490 – Directed Studies A (4)  
ENGL 491 – Directed Studies B (2)  
ENGL 493W – Seminar in Special Topics (4)  
ENGL 494 – Honours Seminar in Research and Methods (4)  
ENGL 496 – Honours Graduating Essay (4)