

**GOALS FOR ENGLISH MAJORS
OHIO WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY**

A. A conviction that literature enriches human experience, as evidenced by:

1. The habit of reading for pleasure and knowledge.
2. An awareness of and appreciation for how literature can contribute to the growth and development of a person's moral imagination.
3. An awareness that literature contributes to a person's ability to read both the world and the self in new ways.

B. Curiosity about the relationship of language and literature to current and historical issues

1. Such issues include, but are not limited to, literary, philosophical, social, political, religious, moral, and theological issues.

C. Reading skills

1. Close reading skills:
 - a. Ability to recognize and analyze:
 - 1) Conventions of all sorts, as well as the effects of observing and violating them.
 - 2) Structure.
 - 3) Genre (especially distinguishing features of narrative, drama, poetry, essay).
 - 4) Linguistic features.
 - 5) Rhetorical features (based on categories of author, subject, purpose, audience).
 - b. Awareness of significant contexts:
 - 1) Historical.
 - 2) Cultural and multicultural.
 - 3) Authorial.
 - c. Awareness of relevant and useful critical theories.
2. A working definition of "literariness":
 - a. Familiarity with ways of distinguishing instrumental from aesthetic discourse.
 - b. Sensitivity to the polysemous nature of literary language. ("Polysemous" is "having or characterized by many meanings." Literary language tends to have multiple meanings and thrive on ambiguities.)
 - c. Ability to formulate value judgments about literature.
3. Sensitivity to language as a medium
 - a. Denotation, connotation, and association.
 - b. Prosody ("the theory and principles of versification, particularly as they refer to rhythm, accent, and stanza").
 - c. Figurative language, subdivided into tropes (like metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, simile, irony) and figures of speech (like antithesis, apostrophe, hyperbole, personification).
 - d. Linguistic change and variation.
 - e. Various styles (high, middle, low, mixed).
4. Awareness of criticism as a cooperative effort among readers, which would include:
 - a. The ability to evaluate and make critical use of others' commentaries.
 - b. The ability to apply relevant critical theories.
5. The ability to ask important questions about issues, topics, texts, or figures.

D. Writing skills

1. Extensive acquaintance with the writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revision, editing, proofreading, and manuscript preparation).
2. Sensitivity to the rhetorical situation (author, subject, purpose, audience)
3. Ability to:
 - a. Write correctly, in clear paragraphs and essays.
 - b. Produce a classic thesis-driven essay.
 - c. Construct an argument appropriate to the purpose.
 - d. Support an argument with relevant and sufficient evidence.
 - e. Use the library effectively.
 - f. Control tone and voice.
 - g. Adapt style to purpose and audience.
 - h. Use or adapt the conventions of a variety of traditional genres.

E. Knowledge of authors, texts, and language; A selection that alerts students to:

1. Intertextuality (the many linguistic connections among different texts, both explicit and implicit).
2. Historical perspective (including the traditional canon as well as extensions of it).
3. Cultural context (including the complex interplay among historical progression, the production of a literary text, and subsequent receptions of that text).
4. The English language as an historical and global phenomenon.
5. Non-English texts that have profoundly shaped literature in English (such as the Bible and Aristotle).
6. Literature in English as an historical and global phenomenon.
7. Canon formation as affected by issues of race, class, and gender. What counts as “literature” and why?
8. Syntactic structures and their terminology.

F. Awareness and knowledge of critical approaches.

1. Ability to do close textual analysis.
2. A basic critical vocabulary.
3. Awareness of one’s own critical assumptions.
4. Familiarity with major critical theories.