



Readers, writers, thinkers... responding to the world

In the English Department at Earlham College, we read and write to expand our ways of seeing and responding to the world. As we engage with literature, we encounter the experiences, cultures, values and truths of many kinds of people, in the present and in the past. We read, write and discuss literature, seeking not only to gain wisdom, but also to change our lives, societies and the world in pursuit of social justice. At the same time, by studying literature we encounter and respond to beauty. We read to gain a wider perspective, and also because we love literature for its own sake, knowing that the experience of reading and writing enriches us spiritually, emotionally and intellectually.

Asking hard questions of significant texts

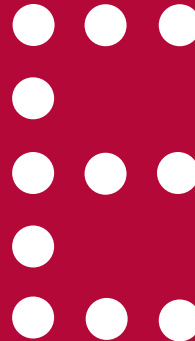
The study of English at Earlham is intellectually demanding. English students read literature closely, asking hard questions of significant texts. Along with faculty, students examine how to approach those texts and explore their relationship to their own and other people's lives. The work as readers, writers, and thinkers is rigorous and supple, unique and collaborative.

Through this study, the Department strives to serve students with many different goals: students preparing for graduate work; students planning further study in various fields; and students not intending to continue formal education beyond the Bachelor of Arts degree.



Earlham Facts

- Founded in 1847 by the Society of Friends, Earlham is rooted in the ideals of Quakerism.
- 1,200 undergraduate students representing 44 states and 71 countries
- Male 44%, Female 56%
- 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio
- More than 64 percent of every graduating class participates in an off-campus study program.
- Earlham graduates are well prepared for further study; nearly half of Earlham alumni graduating in the last 10 years enrolled in graduate or professional school.



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Earlham welcomes all who come to seek for truth in a diverse community that accords respect to every individual. Each is asked to contribute to the understanding of all.

English

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Read vigorously, write rigorously

All courses in the English Major use a wide range of assignments to help students write rigorously and expressively about their experiences as readers. The Department offers opportunities for beginning and advanced creative writing. Although there is no single, dominant mode of teaching in the English Department, frequent use is made of discussion and other collaborative methods that ask students to speak with integrity and listen with respect.

“My studies as an English major are exhilarating because every new book helps me see books I read in the past in a new light as plots, characters, locations, time periods and lexicons blend into one large narrative. The brief glimpses I’ve managed to catch of this behemoth narrative would not have been possible without the consistent guidance, support, respect and love provided by the English faculty. I am constantly in awe of the fluency my professors have with the texts and equally as challenged by the questions that arise from their fluency. My professors challenge me to challenge myself — pushing my limits of creative and abstract thinking — encouraging me to read myself cross-eyed and explain what I see. They respect me as a person and as a scholar.

— Dylan Block-Harley '09
Seekonk, Massachusetts

For more information about Earlham College’s English Department, visit www.earlham.edu/english.

“Along with becoming literate and compelling writers, our majors learn a new way to look at the world. Literature is about two things: a text, with all of its internal complexities; and literary tradition, which sets that text in a galaxy of influence, of responses to and conversations among authors going back to Homer. Even though this tradition is bafflingly complex, you can’t pretend it isn’t there for the sake of simplicity; that’s like talking about salmon without, say, talking about water or grizzly bears. So our students learn that studying literature means constantly admitting complexity and thinking responsibly.”

— Nate Eastman, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English

Internships, off-campus study and research

English students work with professionals on campus, in the Richmond community, and on off-campus academic programs. Recent internship sites and off-campus study includes: The New York Arts program, London, India, Japan, and May-term study in Ghana.

Students work on research projects with faculty, including work on Literature of the Puerto Rican Migration, a Reception Study of Adrienne Rich, the Connections of Literature and Architecture, and Taking Othello from Page to Stage. Students have created an area 'zine with creative writing by community members, have had experiences teaching English as a second language, and have organized a Public Poetry Fest in Richmond.



Opportunities to share, contribute

Earlham students attend readings, meet and work with visiting authors and poets on campus and in nearby cities. The Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) brings one or two visiting writers to campus each semester. This is in addition to other visiting writers such as Saul Williams, Robert Pinsky, Naomi Shihab-Nye, Nicholson Baker and Sonia Sanchez.

In addition, students have the opportunity to contribute to *The Crucible*, the Earlham literary journal, the Gettman Essay contest and the Bain-Swigget Prize. They also participate in a combined reading with students and faculty from Indiana University East. Students started a Literary Arts House on campus where they live with others interested in discussing literature and in creating literary works.

Students interested in teaching have the opportunity to work as Peer Learning Assistants in the Writing Center, as Learning Assistants in Earlham courses, and as tutors in local schools.



Students prepared for further study

Earlham is ranked 41st (in the 97th percentile) among 1,469 institutions of higher learning in the U.S. in the percentage of graduates who go on to receive Ph.D.s in English and literature. Of those receiving Ph.D.s in the humanities in general, Earlham ranks 34th (also in the 97th percentile).

English graduates: Leaders of every type and kind

English graduates are teachers, writers, editors, managers of non-profit and social action organizations, professors, lawyers, journalists and librarians. They are workers and leaders of every type and kind, in various places around the world.

Many graduates hold advanced degrees in English and Creative Writing from a variety of institutions including: the University of Wisconsin, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Virginia, the University of Iowa, and Northeastern, Harvard and Columbia universities.

“The Earlham English Department was, and continues to be, a huge support in my life. There were certainly times that I considered giving up; but my classes were so amazing and my professors were so supportive that I kept going. Through their example and encouragement, they convinced me that I want to continue studying literature.

— Jess Waggoner '08
Gadsden, Alabama