Dear MA Candidates in English:

I have enclosed for your consideration course descriptions for the five graduate courses that the department will offer during the Fall 2015 semester. Please examine the course descriptions carefully and call me at 718-982-3639 or contact the instructor, if you have any questions. My office is 2S 121 and my hours are Monday and Wednesday from 2:30-3:30 and by appointment. You can also reach me via e-mail at the following address: Katharine.goodland@csi.cuny.edu.

If you have completed your fourth course, it is time to submit your first master’s paper, so I can send it to the English faculty, who will read and evaluate it. Paper two can be submitted after paper one passes. The second paper must receive a grade of pass before you can sit for the master’s examination. Please consult the enclosed sheet of directions to help you in this endeavor. The instructor for whom you wrote the paper must guide it through revision and approve it before the faculty reads it. You can get the approval form from the graduate coordinator or Ms. Wendy Pearson in 2S 218. Be certain, where applicable, that the paper conforms to Modern Language Association guidelines for documentation and style. Consult Joseph Gibaldi’s MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Ninth Edition for particulars, if you feel uncertain about specific revisions and formatting. Whether research (literature or linguistics) or creative efforts, we require papers that are fifteen to twenty pages in length. Not completing your papers according to the program’s guidelines may hold up your graduation. This semester, approved papers will be accepted until Wednesday, December 2nd.

When you have finished your course work and paper two has been approved, you may register for English 892, which leads to the MA exam. If you have previously enrolled in this course, but have not completed it, you should note that the incomplete must be removed within two years. After that, it results in a grade of FIN, and you will need to reregister for the course. I have enclosed a document with some suggestions for preparing for the master’s examination.

If you are currently enrolled in ENG 892 and preparing for the master’s examination, and if you plan to graduate in January 2016 the examination must take place by Wednesday, December 2nd. When you and your three examiners think you are ready for the exam, contact me. I will ask your examiners for the test questions. If you plan on taking the exam in the fall, contact me by November 16th, so I will have time to secure questions and set your examination.

If you have any questions or concerns about your graduate work, please do not hesitate to contact me. Remember too, each student must meet with the coordinator for advisement before registering for the next semester.

Sincerely,

Katharine Goodland
Associate Professor
Coordinator, Master of Arts Program in English
Fall 2015

ENG 670  Workshop in Autobiographical Writing  Prof. A. Chin

This Creative Writing workshop focuses on memoir and creative nonfiction. We will look at how authors employ literary devices such as point of view and fracture, as well as pay attention to setting, details, and character. There will be numerous writing assignments—both in-class as well as take-home. Students turn in workshop-ready stories to be critiqued by the entire class.

Thursday 6:30 – 9:50

ENG 686  The Teaching of Writing  Prof. R. Carlo

An introduction to the principal issues, both theoretical and practical, in the teaching of writing. Topics such as the following will be approached through readings in the literature and class scrutiny of the participants’ own experiences as writers: relations between speech and writing, models of the writing process; standard English, bilingualism, and bidialectism; special problems of English usage and orthography; strategies for overcoming blocks and interferences; evaluation of growth in writing.

Monday 6:30 – 9:50

ENG 725  Studies in 20th Century English Literature  Prof. S. Kudsieh

"20th Cent Eng Lit" is a graduate course that examines literature written in the twentieth century with a special focus on the modernist and postmodernist movements. The course will explore modernist and postmodernist techniques of writing; and gender, class and race issues. Assigned texts for fall 2015 include: The Good Soldier by Ford Madox Ford, The Waste Land by T.S. Eliot, Voyage in the Dark by Jean Rhys, Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett, an excerpt from The Tin Drum by Günter Grass, and The Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro.

Wednesday 6:30 – 9:50

ENG 727  Studies in United States Literature  Prof. E. Goldner

Before 1900

This course will examine several nineteenth-century narratives, fiction and nonfiction, that have been remade as films between 1992 and 2013. We will discuss the narratives and the films in their different historical contexts, which include US imperialism, slavery, feminism, and middle-class modes of work and
consumer culture. We will also explore theory about historical memory, narrative, film, and adaptation from one medium to the other.

Reading for the course includes the following nineteenth-century narratives and films based on them: James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*; Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave*; Herman Melville's "Bartleby," Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*; and Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady*. We will also briefly extend our reading into the twentieth century to include Gullah narratives about daily life before and after slavery, recorded as WPA oral histories during the 1930’s, in preparation for Julie Dash’s film *Daughters of the Dust*.

Tuesday 6:30 - 9:50

ENG 729  Studies in Classical and Biblical Backgrounds to Literature  Prof. G. Gianoulis

This course focuses on the Bible as literature and its influence on other literature. Biblical literature will be the foundation for the semester's discussions. We will explore themes in the bible that resonate across millennia – good/evil, love, heroism, family, community, hospitality, justice, etc. Although modern readers can relate to these themes, our appreciation of their biblical roots is limited by the distance of millennia and translation. Two goals for the semester are 1) to understand how oral tradition and its conventions manifest themselves in the written bible as we know it today, and 2) to understand the bible's historical, cultural, and social context, which will enhance our appreciation of biblical themes. We will use the English Standard Version of the bible. Other course texts include -- but are not limited to -- Josephus, Bunyan, Dante, Chaucer, Milton, Donne, Blake, and, of course, C.S. Lewis.

Saturday 9:00-12:20
Preparation of Master’s Papers: Instructions for Graduate Students

[Can be submitted during Fall and Spring Semesters only]

The Master of Arts degree in English at CSI requires twenty-eight credits, two master’s papers, and a master’s examination. For students who joined the program in September 2005 or later, who desire professional certification in adolescence education, thirty-four credits are required for the degree. The Program Coordinator will explain the specific requirements for the thirty-four-credit degree. Here are our guidelines for preparing and submitting the two master’s papers.

Your master’s papers may be either research papers on literary or linguistics topics, or creative papers for those following the writing track – an autobiographical piece, a short story, a part of a novel, a collection of poems, a one act play, or an act of a longer play. Whether research based (literature or linguistics) or creative, the papers must come out of the seven courses taken and must be at least fifteen and preferably over twenty pages in length. No exceptions will be made to this requirement. You submit your first master’s paper after completing the fourth course and the second paper after completing the seventh course. Two members of the faculty read the papers and grade them Honors, Pass or Fail. If two readers pass the essay, it passes, if two grade it honors the paper earns honors. If one reader passes and essay and the other fails it, the paper goes to a third reader whose decision is final. If a paper fails, the coordinator will request revisions.

You should not hand in unrevised course papers. However good a paper may be when it is first submitted to an instructor at the end of a semester, performing further revisions is an important part of the graduate program. The first step in preparation of a master’s paper is to revise it in accordance with the comments made by the course instructor; next, you should show that instructor the revised version and ask whether it is ready to be submitted. The instructor may suggest additional revisions. If the original instructor is unavailable for some reason, you may work with another professor. Under no circumstances are you to submit papers without a copy of the approval form signed by a professor. The department also strongly suggests that you discuss the submission process with the coordinator of the program.

There should be no problems with the punctuation and the grammar of your papers. A student who receives a Master’s degree should understand the rules of grammar and punctuation. If necessary, you should study a writer’s handbook and seek help from instructors.

The department follows the style guidelines of the Modern Languages Association (MLA) for literature of writing papers, or those of the American Psychological Association (APA) for linguistics paper. The guidelines of the former (MLA) are described in the sixth edition of the MLA handbook, edited by Joseph Gibaldi, and are the ones used by English and Modern Language academic departments in the United States. The guidelines of the latter (APA) are used in the field of Linguistics. In all matters of documentation and bibliography, including notes and the list of works cited, you must adhere to MLA specifications for literary papers, and to the APA specifications for linguistics papers. Papers that ignore or fail to follow these guidelines will not pass.

Graduate work is professional training, and the department expects graduate papers to be significantly superior to undergraduate efforts — well-written, well-organized, and sophisticated in their research and their analysis of literary texts. You need to learn how to use the library and basic electronic tools including the online MLA bibliography and the JSTOR and other databases of journal articles. You must understand the difference between academic and non-academic secondary material. Your master’s paper should cite and use at least ten secondary sources. Your use of these sources should reflect some sense of the ongoing scholarly conversation about the student’s topic. You should not casually and gratuitously add citations to the paper without any relevance to its argument. You should think of your paper as a contribution to an ongoing conversation among scholars. You should not simply cite a secondary source as if the quotation were an undisputed truth: you should feel empowered to disagree with the secondary materials, describe the strengths and limitations of the approaches of other scholars, and characterize the debates between those scholars. The revised version of your paper should also show some evidence of breadth of reading in the primary material. If you wrote an essay on a novel by Dickens, you should read at least one other novel by Dickens before finish the revisions.
Preparing for the Master’s Examination

[May be taken during the Fall and Spring Semesters only]

After completing the seven courses and passing the two master’s papers, the MA student at CSI is ready for the final requirement of the degree: the master’s examination. The examination consists of three essays written in three hours at one sitting. Only students whose two master’s papers the department passes and whose grade point average in the seven courses is at least a 3.00 may take the exam. There are no exceptions to these rules.

In consultation with graduate instructors, the candidate chooses three separate areas of study, or reading, from three separate graduate courses that he or she has taken. A contract about what texts to read is struck between the candidate and each of the instructors. The candidate then enrolls in English 892, an independent study course worth two credits, on a form available from the coordinator of the program.

Often the process of choosing the instructors to work with and enrolling in English 892 overlap, and this is not a problem, but it is important that the coordinator know of the candidate’s choice of instructors. They will write one question each and grade it “Pass, Honors, or Fail.” Honors on the examination are awarded if the candidate earns honors on all essays. In the event of failure, the candidate will be asked to sit a second time for the parts of the examination not passed. Times and dates for the examinations are arranged with the coordinator of the program.

Candidates are strongly advised to spend one semester or at least a summer (three months) doing the reading. Do not attempt to sit for this examination without full preparation. Anything less than a concentrated amount of study will ensure a poor performance. Assuming the instructors are willing, candidates may confer with the graduate instructor about the substance of the works they read. Instructors will not reveal the question that they will frame for the candidate, but a literary discussion is always in order. Finally, candidates need to know that the reading they do for independent study goes beyond the reading done in the graduate courses that they have taken. Independent study does not rehash what has been done. It builds upon previous study in areas of the candidate’s choosing.

Katharine Goodland, Professor of English
Coordinator, MA in English