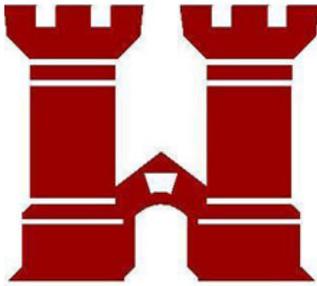


English Major

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Description

When I tell people that I am an English major, their immediate response is “you must write *a lot* of papers!” They don’t understand that majoring in English is *far* more exciting than the constant repetition of reading novels and writing about them. The English program at W&J offers students an education that teaches **thorough reading, clear speaking and persuasive writing**. It’s the ultimate triple threat.



W&J

I have heard people express their belief that majoring in something like English restricts your career options. Wrong again. It’s *actually* quite the opposite. When graduating from W&J with an English degree, your career opportunities are endless. The program prepares students for careers in business, teaching, law, public relations, human resources and *many* more. English majors are the professional world’s secret weapon. They are wanted *everywhere* because of their constant close analysis of material and ability to clearly reiterate their findings.

At W&J, the Departmental staff goes to extreme lengths to assure their student’s success. Led by Chair, Dr. Linda Troost, the department offers courses in American and British Literature that spans over many time periods. Some other courses include Science Writing, History of the English Language, Shakespeare, Criticism and Theory, Creative Writing, Reading Fiction, Comedy in Text, and many more. There is something for *everyone*. The English department offers a major, a minor, and a concentration. Also, there is a concentration in Professional Writing offered through the English Department.

The course requirements and offerings can be found in the college catalog online (link posted below). To finalize a major, students must complete a seminar course where they will concentrate on a particular topic throughout the semester and deliver a final presentation to the department.

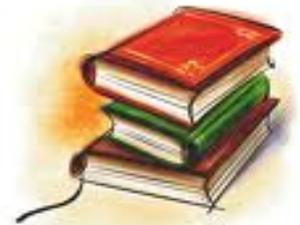
Now, you can’t have *all* work and *no* play! There are exciting campus clubs and activities that are affiliated with the English Department. The **Franklin Literary Society**, supported by the English department, was one of the *first* student organizations at W&J and continues actively today. The club gives students the chance to join their peers and professors for rich discussion of literature and subjects surrounding it. The Society sponsors an annual English Major Mixer (open to non-English majors too) that allows students to enjoy the company of their teachers and fellow classmates outside of the classroom. Also, the Society takes a trip to downtown Pittsburgh about once a semester to watch a play.

Alongside The Franklin Literary Society, **The Wooden Tooth Review** is supported by the English Department. This is the annual student published magazine that represents the work of the creative writing students. All students enrolled in a creative writing class contribute to the magazine, but any student is permitted to submit their work.

Each intersession, Dr. Richard Easton teaches the class “London Theatre.” Professor Easton knows that the *only* way his students will understand the theatre to its fullest extent is to actually travel to London---so he does. He takes his class to London to *actually* indulge in the culture and truly understand the theatre. The trip has been around since 1984 and is *always* a great time.

The English honorary society, **Sigma Tau Delta**, recognizes the high achievement of English students. There is an induction ceremony once a year that recognizes these hard working students.

Majoring in English supplies students with a well-rounded education. When we study literature we are studying science, math, history, religion and other topics that people have *no* idea about. Majoring in English will properly prepare you for the professional world. It’s a decision that I am sure you will *not* regret.



Zoom-in

Davis Memorial Hall is the home to the English department at W&J. The house has gone through *many* transformations before becoming property of the English department. The American colonial style house has been standing for *more than 160 years*. With its white painted brick and forest green shutters, the house was first constructed by college trustee, Alexander Reed in 1847. Reed built the house as his own residence. His family lived in the home until about 1939 when the school gained ownership. At this point the house served as a dormitory that housed 33 male students---the school was still all male at this point. The dorms did not stay long in Davis Hall, as they were soon replaced by the Electrical Engineering Department.

After 100 years standing, the building needed some *serious* renovations. Harry Hamilton and Tillie Wilkonson Davis provided the funds for the remodeling, and in their honor, Reed Dormitory had been changed to Davis Memorial Hall. After the renovation, the building was handed over to the English Department and served as offices and classrooms.

Throughout the course of its lifetime, the house has gone from home to dorms to engineering to classrooms to offices. That’s *a lot* of switching around. Through this process, the house gained some *famously* historic memories. Davis Hall was actually once a stop on the underground railroad, and in the early 1930’s, Charles Morse Stotz photographed the house that was later featured in his book, *Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania*.



Marking the southern border of campus, Davis Memorial Hall still stands proud of its 163 years of history. Today the building serves as offices to the English Department. With its cracked black boards, slanted floors, and broken doors the building tells its story. I mean, it could probably use another update, but the risk of losing its remarkable history is really just *not* worth it.

First Person Narrative

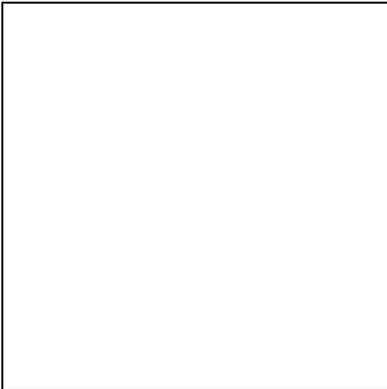
Narrative written by Jenna Wandrisco, based on an interview with John Bonaccorsi

I never really knew what I wanted to do after College. I just assumed that I would figure it out somewhere along the way. People would tell me to take classes in different areas of study until eventually found one that I just fall in love with. That never really happened but I always loved English. I really loved it, but I didn't know what I could do with it. I didn't want to teach and I didn't really want to write. After taking some English classes at W&J, I learned that my narrow view of what English was, was really very inaccurate. So, I found myself in my senior year of my undergraduate still not knowing what I wanted to do. I met with a professor at the school and he suggested law school. I thought, "yea right." However, after many meetings and pep talks he got me to sign up for the LSATs. I did surprisingly well on the exam and with his guidance I applied to

some law schools. I got into the law school of my choice so I figured I give it a shot.

I just finished my first semester of law school and I know that I owe my successes (so far) to the English program at W&J. I was taught to read critically and skeptically-- something that comes in handy with the law. I was taught to write clearly and effectively. But I believe that most of my success can be attributed to the professors I had at W&J. They taught me some valuable lessons -- the kind that can't be found in a textbook. These life lessons are the ones I find to be the most valuable. The W&J English Major Program provides students with an excellent education that will guarantee a successful future.

How to Get Involved



1. Take an English Class!

Every semester there are different classes that are offered at different levels. I think you will surprise yourself when you see how interesting the classes *really* are. And trust me, we do much more than just writing papers.

2. Attend a Franklin Literary Society meeting

This could give you a feel for what the English major is all about. Maybe you will fall instantly in love and maybe you will hate it, but at least you tried it.

3. Take a Professional Writing Course

The Professional Writing Concentration focuses more on writing aspect of English rather than Literature. The classes are not exclusive to the just English department, they span out to Communications, Rhetoric, and ITL. All courses can be found in the College Catalog (link posted below).

Give it a shot!

Important Related Links

[The Wooden Tooth Review](#)

[The Franklin Literary Society](#)

[English Department Homepage](#)

[Washington & Jefferson College Course Catalog](#)