

New courses add variety to revamped English minor



The Purdue English department is located on the third floor of Heavilon Hall.

ALEX KUMAR/PHOTOEDITOR

BY ZOE STARKEY

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Purdue's English department is revolutionizing their program by expanding their scope beyond classic literature, adding new classes that will encompass all academic disciplines and unveiling the innovative "Design your English Minor" initiative for Fall 2017.

The "Design your English Minor" initiative allows students to choose one 200-level English course and any three 200- to 500-level English courses for their minor, for a total of 12 credit hours. The titles of the courses they choose will be available on their transcript where potential employers can view them. The English department has some suggested pairings for courses if students are looking for ideas, including business, technology and health care.

Derek Pacheco, an associate professor and the director of undergraduate studies in the English department, said, "Purdue, even in the time I've been here, has developed such a strong brand for STEM, and it's a matter of finding how we

could complement that. Because we don't want to be lost. We don't want people to say, 'If you want humanities you go to IU.' We want people to say, 'If you go to humanities, they have these really crazy and interesting and innovative humanities programs at Purdue that work with its brand.'"

According to Purdue president Mitch Daniels, during the Fall 2016 new student induction ceremony, students should take a minimum of one class in history, economics, literature, and philosophy.

Barbara Dixon, associate head of the department of English, said, "What's really typical with a humanities degree is that people, when they graduate, make a little less money. But over time, and we're looking at salaries 10-20 years out, our students catch up and even exceed (professional majors' salaries)."

"Things like nursing, accounting, start with a higher salary but end slightly lower, and then English starts with a lower salary but ends with a higher one," said Pacheco.

The English department is working to make students more com-

petitive in the job market by teaching them skills in analysis, reading, communication and storytelling.

Pacheco said, "Storytelling is one of the most sought-after skills in the business world now. People don't even use the word writing anymore; they use storytelling. You have to know how to tell your story. Well, you can't know how to tell your story unless you study stories."

These can be stories learned through books, movies or graphic novels. It's open season on all mediums and resources in the English department.

"We're hoping that we have a wide variety of classes that will appeal to students even if they can only take one. And we have some new courses added to the university core in the humanities section," said Dixon.

New course listings that will be available include "Mystery and Detective Fiction," "Literature and Technology," "Literature for Children" and the "Figures of Myth and Legend" series. "Figures of Myth and Legend" includes classes in "Monsters," "Magic and Marvels" and "Heroes and Villains."

"It goes back to Horace; the foundational pedagogical theory is instruct and delight. The best way to teach is by delighting and capturing somebody's imagination. So if you bring them in with topics they're already passionate about, you make them learning these fundamental skills all that much more satisfying. And so that's what we're trying to do," said Pacheco. "Come on, everybody at Purdue, take some classes with us. If you're interested, we've got a class for you. It can be Shakespeare, but it can be Dragons. It can be technical writing, but it can be graphic novels. And all of these classes are going to give you fundamental skills that you can transfer to the job market."

For more details on the "Design your English Minor" initiative and available courses, students are welcome to visit the English department main office on the third floor of Heavilon Hall, email MajorInEnglish@purdue.edu or check it out online at <https://www.clas.purdue.edu/english/undergraduate/minors.html>. The minor will officially be available in Fall 2017.