

ENGLISH AND CULTURAL STUDIES

About the Department

English Faculty (<https://spu.edu/academics/college-of-arts-sciences/english-cultural-studies-department/faculty/?d=English>)

Social Justice and Cultural Studies Faculty (<http://spu.edu/academics/college-of-arts-sciences/english-cultural-studies-department/faculty/>)

English and Cultural Studies Department Website (<https://spu.edu/academics/college-of-arts-sciences/english-cultural-studies-department/>)

The English & Cultural Studies department offers two main programs. Most of the department's faculty provide expertise to both programs. All of us are motivated by a love of language, avid curiosity about how the world works, and a Christian commitment to building more just, equitable, and inclusive communities—both inside the classroom and out.

English Majors and Minors

In the English major, students can choose between a creative writing concentration or a literature concentration. Both concentrations are well-suited for a wide variety of careers. Students interested in pursuing a Master of Fine Arts and/or a career in imaginative writing are best served by the creative writing concentration; those who are interested in teaching at the middle school, high school or college level should take the literature concentration. The department also offers English minors in Creative Writing, Literature, and Professional Writing.

Social Justice and Cultural Studies Major

The Social Justice and Cultural Studies major provides at least six foundational courses in cultural studies that train students to analyze systems of power and social formations such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship. This interdisciplinary major also partners with departments across campus to provide five distinct vocational tracks for students to choose from, depending on where and how students aspire to create social change: Advanced Cultural Studies; Art for Social Change; Environmental Justice; Pre-Law, Human Rights & Policy; and Social Advocacy & Community Work.

Our Mission

Paying deep attention to how humans use language and cultural signs is an ethical and spiritual discipline, one that teaches intellectual humility even as it empowers us to transfigure the world. Our programs in creative writing, literature, and social justice foster each student's capacity for empathetic understanding, imaginative insight, and compelling wordcraft. By exploring cultural productions (literature, film, technologies, social movements) of various peoples and time periods, our students learn how to wrestle—rigorously, inventively, and fearlessly—with complex human questions about race and class, gender and sexuality, faith and truth, and material Christian practices. By the time they graduate, students will have had extensive training in charitable critical thinking, analytical interpretation, persuasive argumentation, and intercultural competencies. These skills prepare students for a wide range of careers in areas such as publishing, marketing, and digital media; creative arts and entertainment; education and library science; law, medicine, or ministry; environmental studies; non-profits, social advocacy, and civil rights policy.

Majors

- English: Creative Writing Concentration (BA) (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/college-schools/cas-arts-humanities/english-cultural-studies-programs/english-creative-writing-concentration-ba/>)
- English: Literature Concentration (BA) (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/college-schools/cas-arts-humanities/english-cultural-studies-programs/english-literature-concentration-ba/>)
- Social Justice & Cultural Studies: Advanced Cultural Studies (BA) (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/college-schools/cas-arts-humanities/english-cultural-studies-programs/social-justice-cultural-studies-advanced-cultural-studies-ba/>)
- Social Justice & Cultural Studies: Art for Social Change (BA) (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/college-schools/cas-arts-humanities/english-cultural-studies-programs/social-justice-cultural-studies-art-social-change-ba/>)
- Social Justice & Cultural Studies: Environmental Justice (BA) (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/college-schools/cas-arts-humanities/english-cultural-studies-programs/social-justice-cultural-studies-environmental-justice-ba/>)
- Social Justice & Cultural Studies: Pre-Law Human Rights & Policy (BA) (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/college-schools/cas-arts-humanities/english-cultural-studies-programs/social-justice-cultural-studies-pre-law-human-rights-policy-ba/>)
- Social Justice & Cultural Studies: Social Advocacy & Community Work (BA) (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/college-schools/cas-arts-humanities/english-cultural-studies-programs/social-justice-cultural-studies-social-advocacy-community-work-ba/>)

Minors

- English Creative Writing Minor (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/college-schools/cas-arts-humanities/english-cultural-studies-programs/english-creative-writing-minor/>)
- English Literature Minor (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/college-schools/cas-arts-humanities/english-cultural-studies-programs/english-literature-minor/>)
- English Professional Writing Minor (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/college-schools/cas-arts-humanities/english-cultural-studies-programs/english-professional-writing-minor/>)

Program Learning Outcomes

English Programs

Upon completing the English major, students should be able to

1. Interpret texts and cultural artifacts using “close reading,” a method of literary and cultural analysis that attends to a work's genre, its linguistic and aesthetic features, and its effects on readers
2. Place literature and other media in a historical context, understanding how any text (and its criticism) is part of a “long conversation” over time and across space
3. Identify ways that texts can enforce, resist, or ameliorate problematic social systems of power
4. Articulate the value of literary ways of knowing, especially in regard to metaphor, ambiguity, irony, paradox, and mystery

5. Identify various literary and rhetorical strategies for putting Christian values in conversation with other religious and social perspectives
6. Produce analytical writing that asserts a clear and significant claim, marshals compelling evidence, charitably anticipates and addresses alternative interpretations, and responsibly integrates and cites researched sources
7. Articulate the value of recursive processes of drafting, revising, and sentence-level editing, whether in critical or creative writing

Social Justice Programs

Upon completing the Social Justice and Cultural Studies major, students should be able to

1. Articulate an understanding of the dynamics of power, history, and representation that form culture and produce patterns of inequality
2. Demonstrate an awareness of how culture informs social, communal, and personal identities and relationships
3. Develop an understanding of the links between cultural ideologies, social institutions, activism, and everyday practices
4. Address issues of inequity with aesthetic presentations and/or develop skills to implement policies and practices of social justice
5. Ask complex questions about gender, race, class, faith, and power

Study Abroad Opportunities

South Africa: Literature and Theatre

This SPU Global Seminar studies literature, theater, and cultures in South Africa. Taken during the month of December (after Autumn Quarter).

Spain and Morocco: Writing and Resistance

This SPU Global Seminar studies literature and transnational culture in Spain and Morocco. Taken during the month of December (after Autumn Quarter).

For details about these and other study abroad opportunities, visit SPU's Study Abroad (<http://studyabroad.spu.edu/>) pages.

Future Teachers

If you are interested in teaching English Language Arts at the middle school to high school level, you should plan to complete the English: Literature Concentration (BA) major along with the Secondary Certification (<https://catalog.spu.edu/undergraduate/college-schools/school-education/certifications/secondary-certification/>) program through the School of Education. This program leads to an endorsement in English Language Arts for grades 5-12.

Contact the School of Education (soe-cert@spu.edu) for complete information on the certification program.