

The One-Subject M.A. in English/American Studies at Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Background Information

German degree programs are usually made up of lectures, courses, and seminars which are structured into teaching units that are called “modules.” These modules sometimes consist not only of courses, but also of the exams that are necessary for completion of a module or a degree program. Modules involve various activities of study (e.g. courses, labs, excursions, and self-study). Degree programs usually require that students complete a combination of compulsory modules, compulsory elective modules, and elective modules. Each module is worth a certain number of credit points, which reflects the workload that is necessary for completion of the module. Students will find an overview of the modules, their general structure, and a list of the individual courses offered with which they can fill a module in the departmental course catalogs / module handbooks published each term. Student performance is tested by means of various testing methods, including written and oral examinations and/or term papers.

Specialization

The areas of specialization / categories that students choose their modules/courses from are:

Linguistics

Cultural Studies GB

Cultural Studies US

American Literature

English Literature before 1700

English Literature after 1700

Course of Studies

In our M.A. degree programs (both the One- and Two-Subject M.A.), modules are defined as teaching units consisting of either a lecture (*Vorlesung*) or a course (*Übung*) and a seminar (*Seminar*) from the same area of specialization. Thus, each module consists of two courses from the same area of specialization / category. Lectures and courses are credited with three credit points; seminars are credited with five credit points. (A module is thus credited with a total of eight credit points.)

For the One-Subject M.A. nine modules from the above listed areas of specialization / categories have to be completed.

Each semester the lectures, courses and seminars that make up individual modules can be chosen freely from the course catalog (*Vorlesungsverzeichnis*) for the M.A., but students have to declare a major area of specialization by choosing a majority of courses from one category,

i.e. Linguistics or Cultural Studies GB or American Literature – or any other category that the student wants to pick as the focus of her/his M.A. studies. A combination of two practical English courses from our course catalog (Communication MM, Grammar MM, Translation MM) into one Language Practice module is also possible. The two practical language courses are credited with four credit points each. It is actually recommended that students take a Language Practice module, but only one Language Practice module can be chosen as part of the M.A. course work.

Moreover, the RUB English Department offers a focus on “Shakespeare Studies: Early English Literature and Culture,” which allows students to gain expertise in Shakespeare’s writings in their historical and cultural contexts. To obtain the certificate in Shakespeare Studies, One-Subject M.A. students have to take three modules from the field of Shakespeare Studies (as part of their nine modules) and also do their final oral exam on Shakespeare-related topics.

Important: Further Requirements for the One-Subject M.A.

In addition to the nine modules that make up the majority of the course work for the One-Subject M.A., students also have to take an exam module, which consists of the exam module seminar (*Examenskolloquium* or additional seminar – five credit points, which can be credited as a passing grade), a four-hour final written exam and a 45-minute final oral exam which covers three different topics. They also have to write an M.A. thesis of roughly 80 pages total.

Additional Course Work (*Ergänzungsbereich*): throughout the course of studies, thirteen credit points must be obtained from additional courses chosen from the RUB course catalog offerings. These courses should be picked from course catalogs of other academic subjects and fields (both M.A. and B.A). Students often choose to participate in practical language courses (French, Italian, Polish, Dutch etc.) offered at our university’s ZFA (*Zentrum für Fremdsprachenausbildung*) to satisfy this requirement. For international students, taking German language course might be an interesting alternative option.

Exam phase

Requirements: students must have completed 70 credit points (this includes credit points obtained from additional courses (*Ergänzungsbereich*) in order to sign up for the final oral exam or for writing the M.A. thesis.

Examiners: a list of English Department members who are qualified to examine M.A. students can be found in the course catalog for the M.A.

Exams: the exam phase for the One-Subject M.A. consists of the exam module seminar (*Examenskolloquium* or additional seminar), a four-hour final written exam and a 45-minute final oral exam (with one examiner) which covers three different topics. The final written exam is an essay dealing with a choice of exam questions from the areas of Cultural Studies, Literature or Linguistics. If the field of Literature is chosen (American Lit., English Lit. before or after 1700), the exam candidate has to answer a question dealing with either poetry or with literary theory. In either case, a choice of two questions is given. If the field of Cultural Studies or the field of Linguistics is chosen, the exam candidate has to answer one of

two questions pertaining to subjects agreed upon with their examiner. International students are allowed to use a dictionary Native Language/English – English/Native Language. [German students may use a German/English – English/German dictionary.]

M.A. Thesis: the M.A. thesis should be roughly 80 pages in length (with 300 words per page). It has to be finished within a period of four months.

Composition of the Overall Grade

The grades obtained in seminars make up the module grade. (The best) seven of these module grades from the different categories count for 3% each toward your final grade. This means that 21% of the overall final grade is calculated from individual module (*Seminar*) grades. Please note that a Language Practice module cannot be credited towards your final grade. The grade received for the M.A. thesis accounts for 40% of the final grade. The grades of the final oral and written exams each account for 19.5% of the overall final grade.