



Universität
Basel

Departement
Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften



Studying English

MA English

Dr. Thomas Messerli
Anglophone Linguistics and Literary Studies

The MA English in a Nutshell



MA English

ANGLOPHONE LITERARY & CULTURAL STUDIES

- English and Irish Literature since the Renaissance
- North American and General Literature
- Postcolonial Literatures and Cultures (includes all former British colonies and protectorates)
- Cultural Media, Drama and Theater
- Literary History
- Literary Theory

ENGLISH LINGUISTICS

- Cognitive Linguistics
- First and Second Language Acquisition
- Sociolinguistics and the Sociology of English (e.g., Interaction, Politeness, etc.)
- Computer-Mediated Communication
- Translation and Interpreting Studies

Why Study English at Basel?

The Premises:

The Department of English is housed in the so-called "Schönes Haus" ("Beautiful House"), the oldest stone building in Basel. We pride ourselves of offering one of the most beautiful study environments in all of Switzerland!

Innovative Research:

Current and recent large-scale projects include WordWeb / Intertextuality in Drama of the Early Modern Period, The Pragmatics of Fictional Dialogues in Improvised Performance, and Dis-Agree.

Exceptional Teaching:

Our instructors are regularly nominated for teaching awards, and our courses often reflect timely issues. Please do browse our course listings for the last couple of years to get an idea of the range of courses we offer.



Universität
Basel

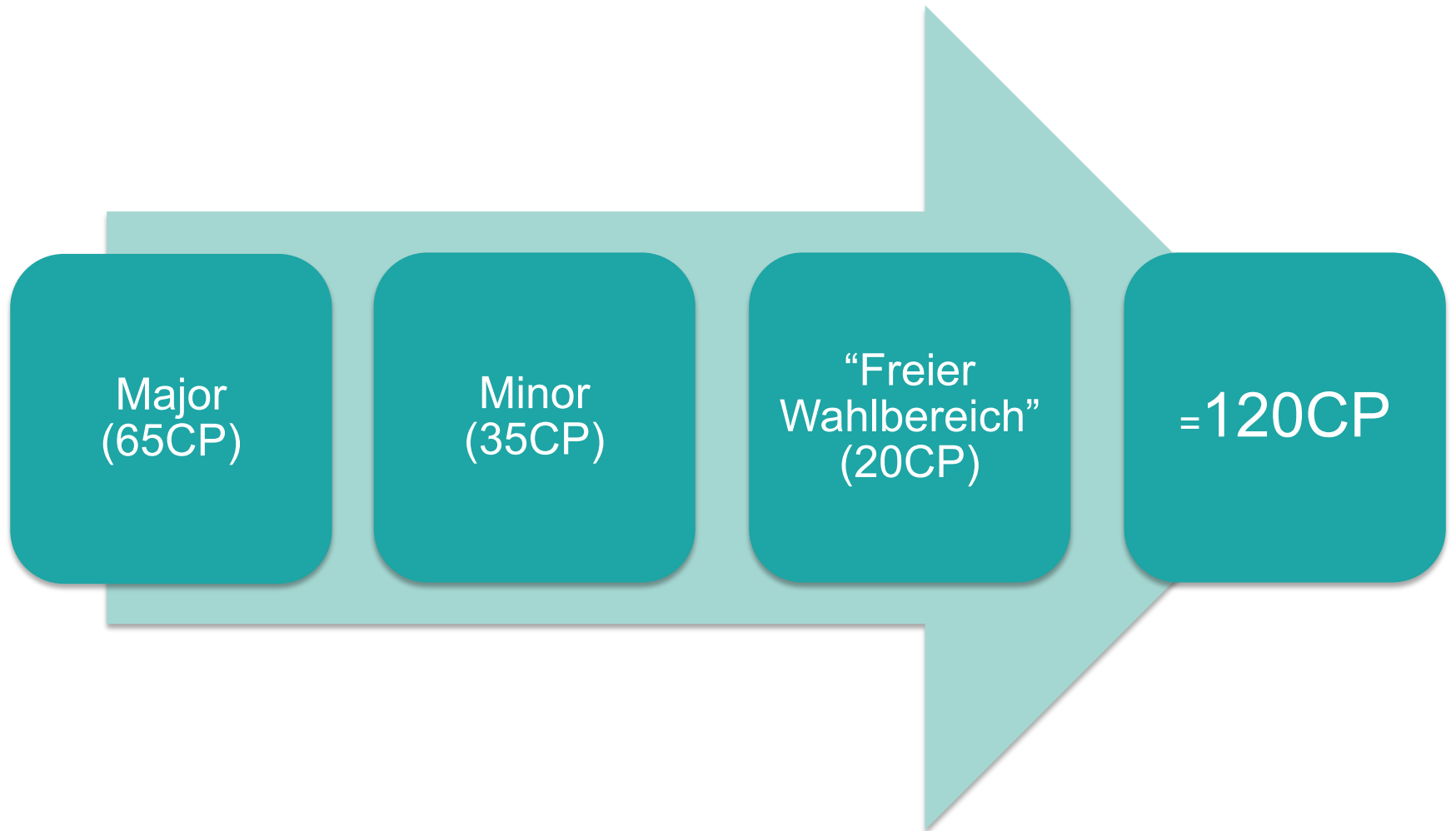
Departement
Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften

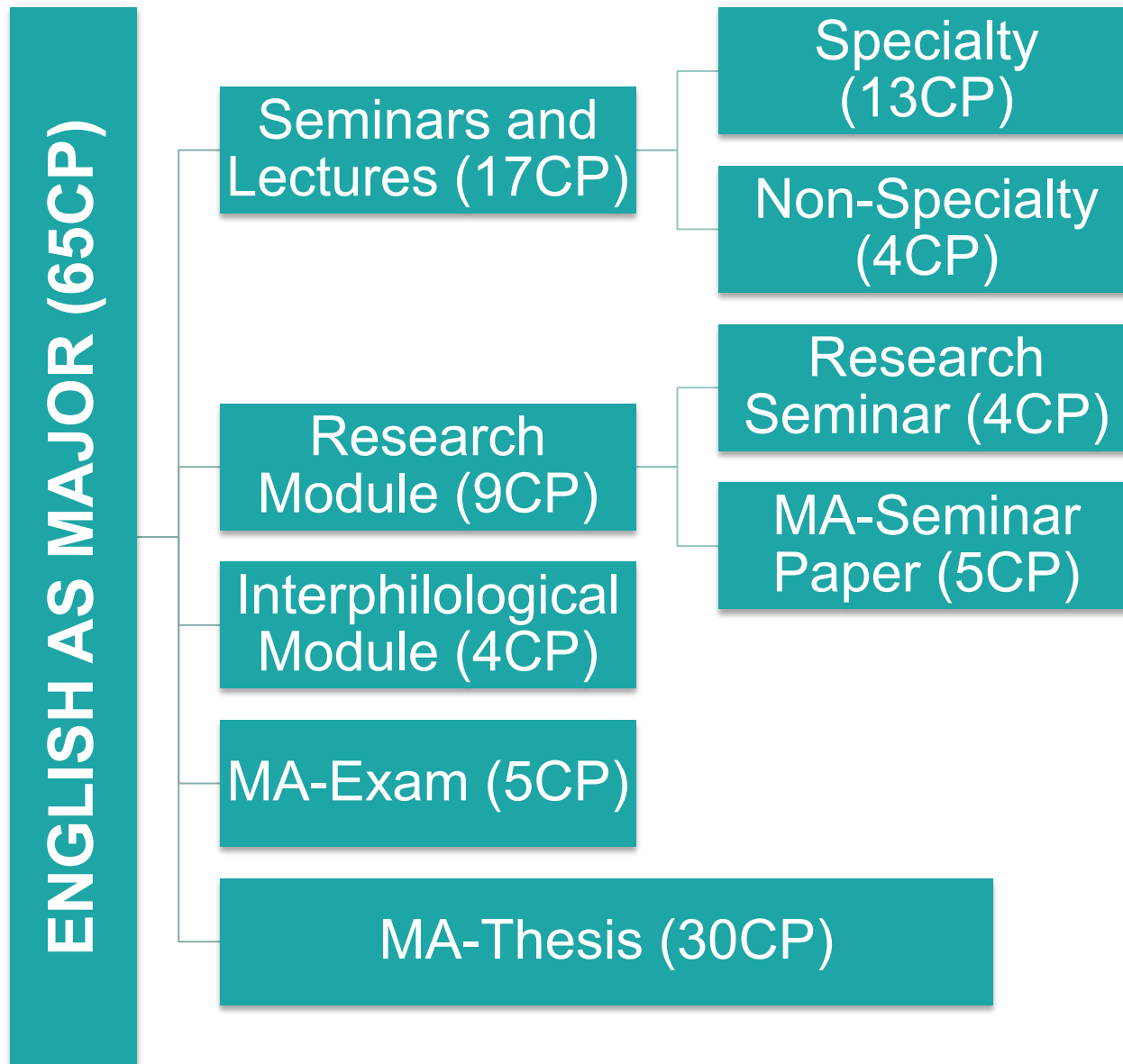


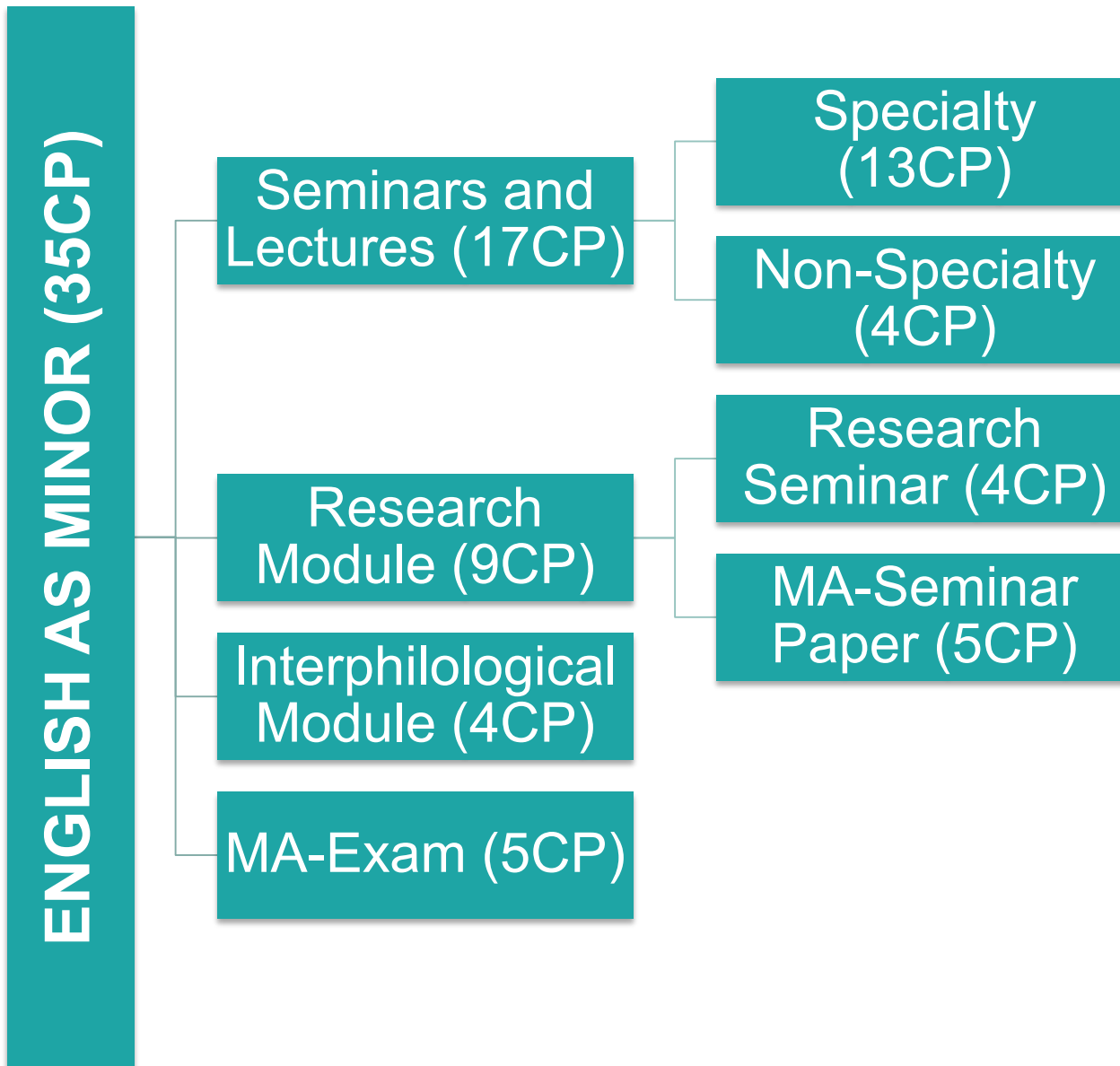
Degree Structure



MA English



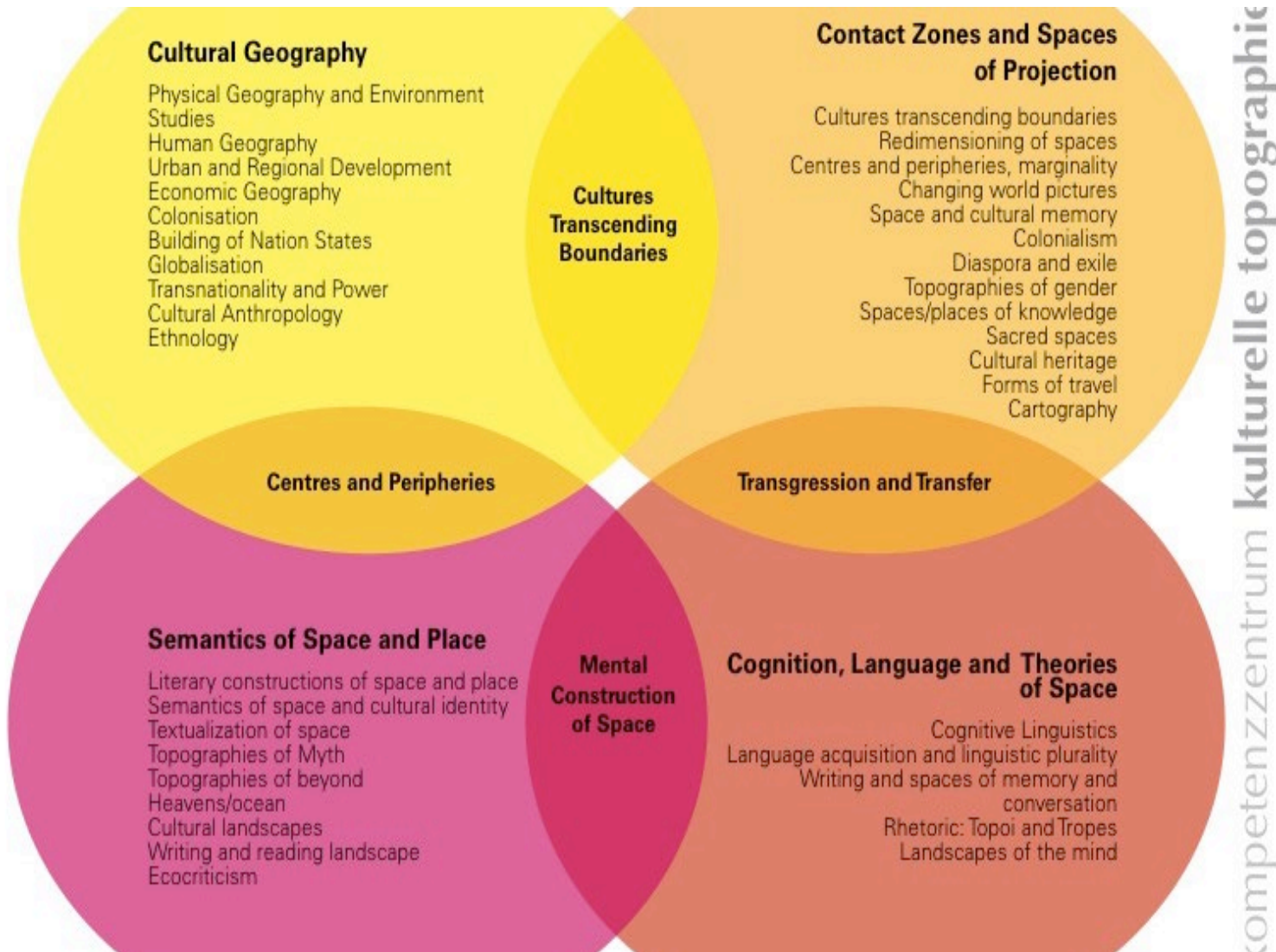




Certificates

- Ancient Greek and Modern Theatre & Performance Studies
- Croatian / Serbian Language and Culture
- Literature and Poetics: Mythopoetics
- Russian Language and Culture
- Czech Language and Culture
- Cultural Topographies

Certificate in Cultural Topographies



Career Prospects

Our graduates take on jobs in various areas:

- education
- cultural institutions
- information and documentation services
- marketing
- newspapers, radio and television
- public relations
- publishing houses
- the diplomatic corps
- academic research and teaching

Students are advised to think about their career choices and to acquire work experience while still at university. The department is happy to help with [internship and teaching practice opportunities](#).



Universität
Basel

Departement
Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften



Research & Teaching: Two Examples



Research Projects in English Linguistics

Our department has housed a variety of groundbreaking **research projects in English Linguistics** funded by internal and external sources.

These are some of our recent and ongoing projects:

- **UniBas:** Pragmatics of Fiction: Lay Subtitling and Online Communal Viewing (PIs: Prof. Dr. Miriam Locher and Dr. Thomas Messerli)
- **UniBas:** Linguistic Manifestations of Different Attachment Types (Pis: Prof. Dr. Heike Behrens and Prof. Dr. Stefan Pfänder)
- **UniBas:** SwissBritNet: Swiss-British cultural exchange and knowledge networks 1600-1780 (Pis: Prof. Dr. Ina Habermann and Prof. Dr. Lukas Rosenthaler)
- **UniBas:** A Dynamic Usage-Based Approach to L2 Development (PI: Dr. Zeynep Köylü)
- **Eucor:** Dis-Agree (PI: Prof. Dr. Miriam Locher)



FONDS NATIONAL SUISSE
SCHWEIZERISCHER NATIONALFONDS
FONDO NAZIONALE SVIZZERO
SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION



Select MA Seminars 2021-2025

2025

The Second Wave of the Native American Renaissance å(Schweighauser)
Intercultural Pragmatics (Debray)

2024

Taylor Swift (Shields)
Advisory Discourse (Locher)

2023

GOTHIC! (Habermann)
Digital Discourse Analysis (Messerli)

2022

Humanitarian Aid Narratives (Schlote)
Learning Context Effects in Second Language Acquisition (Köylü)

2021

A History of American Literary Criticism, 1930s-2020s (Schweighauser)
English Online Health Interaction (Locher)

Plus: Annual EUCOR English Trinationl MA and PhD Conference

MA Seminar in Literary Studies:

The Second Wave of the Native American Renaissance (Schweighauser)

Course description:

Following on the heels of the original wave of the [Native American Renaissance](#) (N. Scott Momaday, James Welch, Leslie Marmon Silko, and others), a younger generation of writers found new ways of exploring American Indian pasts and presents. We will read and discuss Louise Erdrich's debut novel and family saga "Love Medicine" (1984, rev. ed. 1993, 2009—see below for the right edition), Linda Hogan's exploration of the infamous Osage murders in the 1920s in her debut novel "Mean Spirit" (1990), and Sherman Alexie's semi-autobiographical young adult novel "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian" (2007). In discussing "Mean Spirit," we will also watch and talk about Martin Scorsese's film about the Osage murders, "Killers of the Flower Moon" (2023). Along the way, we will consider issues such as the relationship between tradition and modernity, anti-Indigenous violence, humor, and substance abuse. Knowledge of the first-wave of the Native American Renaissance is not required; this is a stand-alone course.

MA Seminar in Linguistics: *Intercultural Pragmatics* (Debray)

Course description:

In this seminar, we will explore the connection between culture and language through a focus on pragmatics. That means that we will: Investigate how different languages solve pragmatic issues by analysing specific speech acts (for example apologies); Explore patterned language use in specific contexts; and discuss the ways cultural norms underpin the linguistic choices we make. We will then consider the implications of this for intercultural interactions and investigate concepts such as the notion of discursive interculture, and research into lingua franca interactions.

As part of the course, you are required to lead the discussion around one of the papers we read and to carry out a small scale research project investigating intercultural interactions. Given that the Eurovision Song Contest takes place in Basel during this semester, we will take this as an example of an intercultural and multilingual event throughout the course and you are encouraged to carry out your research projects around an ESC theme.



Universität
Basel

Departement
Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften



Mobility & Extracurricular Activities



Universität
Basel

SAUTE
Swiss Association of University Teachers of English

16.00-18.00

Guest talk by Prof. Michelle Witten on
James Joyce's *Ulysses*

Brief presentations on:
British life in Basel, past and present
English as a Lingua Franca

From 18.00

Party, with music and dance from:

Bluejay

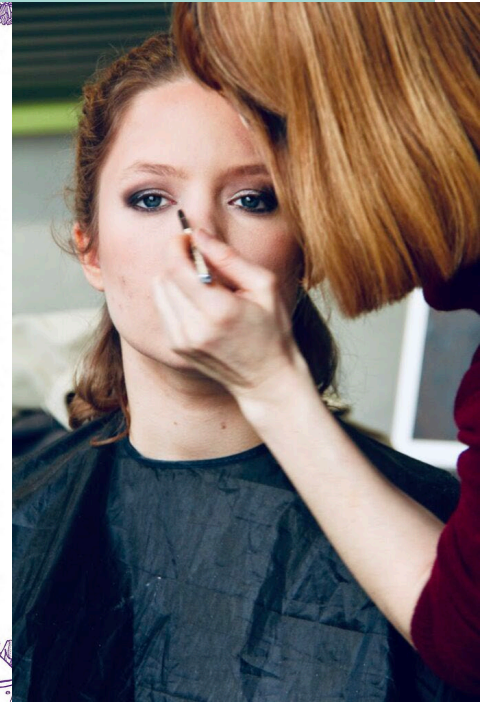
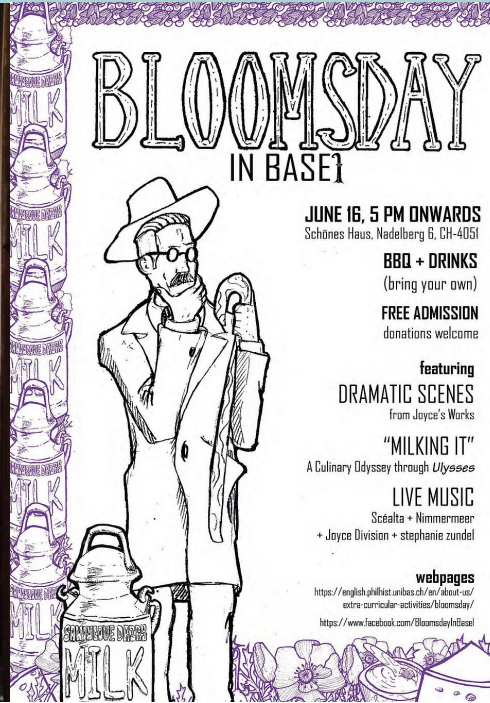
Scottish Country Dance Group Basel

Andrew Shields and the Alumni Band:
The Literati

Friday 13th May
From 16.00 hrs.
Englisches Seminar
Nadelberg 6

EVERYBODY WELCOME!

SAUTE
75TH ANNIVERSARY!
A CELEBRATION OF BRITISH AND IRISH CULTURE IN BASEL



Mobility

➤ EUCOR

All Basel students are eligible to attend courses at our EUCOR partner universities Freiburg i. Br., Mulhouse, and Strasbourg

➤ Studying Abroad

The English Department and the University of Basel have teamed up with a range of international partner institutions to provide you with the best possible study abroad experience

➤ Contact

Simone Sumpf (studienberatung-dslw@unibas.ch)

➤ Mobility Office



Universität
Basel

Departement
Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften



Extracurricular Opportunities and Support



- Student Association
(Fachgruppe Englisch)
- The Gay Beggars
- English Seminar Choir

Frequently Asked Questions

When can I start the MA in English?

The MA English can be started **both in the fall and the spring term**. The registration deadline for the fall term is 30 April, for the spring term 30 November.

How long does it take to study English at the MA level?

The MA is conceived as a **two-year course of full-time study**. It may, however, be taken part-time. This results in prolonged studies.

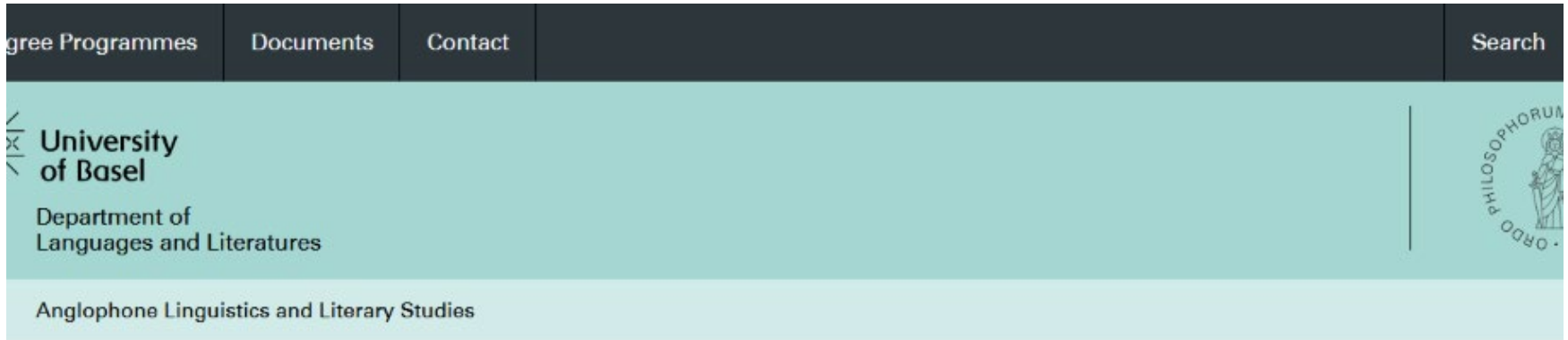
With what other MA subjects can the MA English be combined?

In general, the MA English can be combined with **any other MA subject** offered by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and a selection of other subjects from other faculties at the University of Basel.

Which language requirements do I have to fulfill?

A **BA in English** qualifies you to enroll without any restrictions. Generally, we expect **C2 Proficiency**.

More Information: Department Website



[News and Events](#)

[Studying](#)

[Doctorate](#)

[Research](#)

[About us](#)



Join In!

For a treat of some **actual live teaching**, please get in touch with Dr. Zeynep Köylü (zeynep.koylu@unibas.ch), with whom you can sign up to **join one to two sessions of our current spring term courses**. Please browse our course offerings and tell Zeynep which course you would like to sign up for.



Contact Details

Website: english.philhist.unibas.ch

Simone Sumpf, Student Advisor DSLW: studienberatung-dslw@unibas.ch

Dr. Thomas Messerli
thomas.messerli@unibas.ch

Dr. Zeynep Köylü
zeynep.koylu@unibas.ch

Thomas Manson, MA
thomas.manson@unibas.ch



Universität
Basel

Departement
Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften



Thank you!

Questions?