

# DOCTORAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

Department of English, University at Buffalo

*\*\*for students beginning at UB from Fall 2021\*\**

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce doctoral students to the practices and requirements of UB's English Department PhD Program. You will find information and advice here about a wide range of subjects relating to all stages of your progress through the PhD program, including coursework, examinations, formulating a project, and writing, defending, and filing the dissertation. Do not hesitate to contact the appropriate departmental officers, especially the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), when you have any questions or if you need further information. The English Department Graduate Office is located in 302 Clemens Hall, where the DGS has a room for individual appointments (Clemens 302B).

### The First Week at UB

At the end of August, incoming doctoral students must attend a series of orientation events at which they will be given information about the courses they will be teaching (composition for TAs), the library system at UB, computer technology, immigration (for international students), health insurance coverage, and other matters related to student life. In addition, they will have an opportunity to meet English faculty members, the chair of the Department, and the Directors of Graduate and Master's Studies. Typically, orientations for the Academic and Professional Writing Program and for International Students, as well as the College of Arts and Sciences New Students' Day and Resource Fair, take place the week before school begins. At the end of that week, the English Department holds its own orientation to the Graduate Program, in order officially to welcome you to graduate study.

Teaching Assistantships provide four years (eight semesters) of support, contingent upon satisfactory performance as a student and a Teaching Assistant. Fifth and sixth years of support are available for students making satisfactory progress toward the degree. Students admitted into the PhD program with an MA from UB are not eligible for the fifth year of funding and will receive a four-year Teaching Assistantship. Your initial appointment is for ten months.

**Note:** international students will only be able to register for courses after they attend the International Students' Orientation. The extra fees that appear on their bill will disappear after they attend the orientation session.

**Note:** domestic out-of-state students must apply for New York State Residency by December 1st of their first semester at UB. Students who fail to apply for in-state status in a timely manner will be billed for the difference between out-of-state and in-state tuition.

### Meeting the Director of Graduate Studies

The Director of Graduate Studies functions as advisor for all PhD students in the first and second years (until they select their orals exam committees, toward the end of the second year). During the first two weeks of the academic semester, the DGS will meet with each incoming PhD student to answer questions, discuss interests and goals, and make sure needs have been met. Even so, please remember that the DGS is always available to facilitate your transition to

graduate study and answer any questions you have about procedures or requirements.

### **The First Week of Classes**

Note that if you are “shopping around” and have enrolled in more seminars than you actually mean to take (for instance, 12 credits instead of 9 credits per semester), you need to drop the “extra” seminar by the end of your first week, in order not to incur fees for the additional credit hours (the penalty will not be covered by your tuition waiver after the first week of classes).

### **Credit Transfers**

If you have completed graduate coursework at another institution or received a Master’s Degree from UB, it is usually possible to transfer credits, but bear in mind that this does not allow you to deviate from any UB requirements for coursework. Two points to keep in mind: a) transfer credit (up to 14 credits and potentially more for international students) is decided on a case-by-case basis; and b) the transfer of credits usually occurs in the fourth year, only after completion of coursework and the oral qualifying examination. Transferred credits do not count toward required seminars, but will save money on fees beginning in the fourth year. Please consult the English Graduate Office for further details about this process.

## **PHD PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The basic requirement for the PhD degree is the completion of 72 graduate credits. To be considered full-time, students need to register for 9 credits every semester. Since seminars are each worth 3 credits, students must enroll in 3 seminars every semester during their first two years in the program.

In the English Department, graduate seminars are almost exclusively offered as 500- and 600-level courses. In broad terms, the difference between these levels is: 500-level seminars provide general surveys of a field, period, or approach (methodological, theoretical), in which faculty have leeway in choosing the style and type of required writing; 600-level seminars focus on more specialized topics, with students producing a research essay (20-25 pages) or its equivalent.

Once coursework has been completed, students begin working directly toward their dissertation projects. In order to take the oral qualifying exam and proceed to PhD candidacy, students will need to have taken at least ten (10) intensive seminars. Please note that for all TAs the first three years of graduate study should be scheduled according to the Standard Course Plan, given below. You are highly encouraged to take more than this number during your years at UB. If you would like to take more than the scheduled number of courses in a given semester, please fill out the Course Schedule Change Request form available on the English department's graduate homepage and submit it to the DGS. Please note that the department’s required seminar, ENG 599, does not count toward the 10 intensive seminars.

Beginning with the 2016 entering class, all students are required to fulfill these **Distribution Requirements** within the English Department:

- 1 course in Medieval or Renaissance Literature (EL)
- 1 course in Eighteenth-Century or Nineteenth-Century Literature (18/19)
- 1 course in Twentieth-Century or Twenty-First-Century Literature (20/21)
- 1 course focused primarily on the literatures of colonial and postcolonial societies, or on ethnic minority literatures (ML)

Students with previous MA degrees may opt out of **ONE** of the above requirements.

Students may opt to complete a **Minor Field**, broadly defined as an area of knowledge other than their principle focus. The range of possibilities is vast, but it is strongly advised that the minor field have a cogent relationship to the student's dissertation and/or field of specialization. For instance, someone in nineteenth-century American studies may have a minor field in feminist or postcolonial studies. You may also find that the minor field is an advantage on the job market. If you complete a minor field, fill out the Minor Field Form (available on the English department's graduate homepage) and submit it to the English Graduate Office.

### **Seminars: Intensive vs. Extensive**

In the list of English Department graduate courses for any given semester, you will notice that each seminar is divided into "A" (intensive) and "B" (extensive) sections. This is a distinction observed only by the English Department and the Comparative Literature Department.

**Note:** if you take a graduate seminar outside of either the English or Comparative Literature departments (which is permitted), bear in mind that other departments do not observe this intensive/extensive seminar distinction; consequently, any seminar taken in those departments will automatically count as one of your intensive seminars, and you will be required to fulfill all the requirements for it.

Generally speaking, in the intensive section ("A") of a seminar, you may be required, at the discretion of the faculty member teaching the seminar, to do some or all the following things:

- write a research paper (or the equivalent) at the end of the semester
- write a response on each week's readings
- give an oral presentation on one week's materials
- write a short mid-term paper

In the extensive section ("B") of a seminar, you may be required to do some or all of the above, with the exception of having to write a research paper at the end of the semester.

**Note:** the following courses must be taken as extensive courses: independent studies, reading groups, and the second (and any additional) creative writing course.

### **How to decide which classes to take intensively or extensively**

It is important to strike a balance between taking classes in a wide range of areas with a wide variety of faculty members and taking seminars in areas that will directly relate to the field and concerns of the dissertation project. There is no simple rule of thumb when it comes to deciding which seminars to take intensively or extensively, but, on the whole, students take intensive seminars in areas important to their major fields of interest and with the faculty members whom they will want to work with in the future, either toward the oral qualifying exam or as members of their dissertation committee or both. Students who do not wish to take three seminars intensively in any given semester may take one extensively to decrease their workload, **as long as they complete ten intensive seminars before taking the oral exams.** In the vast majority of cases, students complete all ten required intensive seminars by the fall semester of the third year, with some students choosing to take fewer extensive and more intensive seminars.

### **Publication Workshop**

In the fall of the third year, a faculty member will lead a workshop-style course in which students work to revise a seminar paper for publication. At the end of the course, students will have an article to submit for publication, ideally one that may also serve as the draft of a dissertation chapter. The workshop is strongly encouraged but not required. There are two compelling reasons for being exempted from the workshop. The first involves students who already have extensive experience with academic publishing: they may wish to substitute a seminar course for the workshop. The second involves students who are on an accelerated path toward completing the oral qualifying exam. In either case, the DGS must grant students permission to opt out of the publication workshop.

This **Standard Course Plan** provides a framework for the first three years in the PhD program:

#### Year 1

Fall: intensive seminar / intensive seminar / intensive seminar

Spring: intensive seminar / intensive seminar / ENG 599

#### Year 2

Fall: intensive seminar / intensive seminar / extensive seminar / 105 Practicum

Spring: intensive seminar / intensive seminar / intensive seminar

#### Year 3

Fall: extensive course / supervised reading / Publication Workshop

Spring: supervised reading / supervised reading / CL2 Practicum

## **Learning your field: course work**

During the first semester of the PhD program, you should begin to acquaint yourself with the qualifications expected of someone in your field. The academic job market still largely relies on conventionally periodized fields, such that, even if your dissertation is going to be relatively eclectic, you may consider the advantages of being able to claim expertise in one particular period. When registering for seminars, think broadly about what is or might be useful to your field, and remember that dissertations often touch on several fields. Shape a concentration for yourself from among your varied interests, but without limiting yourself only or primarily to seminars in a narrowly defined sphere. A delimited experience of the discipline will likely fail to provide the necessary context to write the dissertation or be an effective teacher. For instance, although the UB PhD in English has no language requirement, Early Modern students will benefit from Latin; those with especially strong theoretical commitments might wish to gain some familiarity with French or German. Take courses in your field and in contiguous and related fields. A specialist in twentieth-century English or American literature will want to spend time reading in UB's Poetry Collection or know something about Victorian literature. An African Americanist would benefit from coursework in African and Caribbean writing. If you write on twentieth-century fiction, it would be useful for your understanding of that field to study relatively marginalized as well as canonical works. Be sure to read journals in the field(s) in which you are working.

When choosing a dissertation topic, if you are torn between writing on three writers from three fields traditionally distinguished from each other, and writing on three writers from the same field, you likely will want to factor the job market into your decision. While you should not write "to the market," familiarize yourself with how changes to the discipline and its fields have an impact on how jobs are offered and advertised (and vice versa). **It is most important, however, to seek the advice of your orals or dissertation committee chair.**

## **Incompletes**

Although it is possible to take incompletes in graduate seminars at UB, faculty in English **strongly discourage** you from doing so. The grade for an I/U needs to be turned in within a year of your taking the incomplete, so it is important to remain in communication with faculty and give them enough time to read submitted work.

Failure to conclude work for the incomplete within the allotted time frame or accumulated I/Us may prevent the renewal of fellowships granted by the dean's or president's office. **You must rectify all outstanding incompletes before taking your oral qualifying exam.**

## **Supervised Readings (ENG 601) and PhD Qualifying Examination**

In preparation for your PhD qualifying examination, you will schedule three supervised reading courses (ENG 601) with three different faculty members. The faculty members do not all need to be members of the English Department, but each should be a specialist in a field of interest to

you. Select one of these three, with his or her permission, as the chair of your committee, and inform the DGS of your choice. As soon as you have selected a chair for your exam committee, this person becomes your official academic advisor and will be responsible for your ongoing evaluation.

Each supervised reading course consists of a list of works that you will discuss in a series of meetings with the faculty member during a semester. The supervised readings themselves take place in the third year, and students normally do one list in the fall semester and two in the spring. Supervised readings may not count as intensive seminars.

**Note: These supervised reading courses should be scheduled well in advance of the semester in which you plan to meet, if only because certain faculty members can get "booked up" (and, indeed, overbooked) during any one semester. You should bear this fact in mind when making your plans.**

### **Constructing the three reading lists**

The general purpose of the PhD qualifying examination is to assess your knowledge of – and ability to think critically about – all of the texts on your three lists. The lists are designed to help you prepare for the dissertation and to help you develop your teaching range for the job market, where the ability to teach survey and other kinds of "gateway" courses remains crucial.

Ideally one of the three list will be organized around a potential dissertation topic. Your work on this particular list should be instrumental in helping you to move from the oral qualifying examination to the dissertation-writing stage. It is worth noting here that the dissertation prospectus is due to your dissertation committee no later than August 25th, at the start of the fourth year (that is, at the end of the summer that began when you passed your exam). If you plan to complete your dissertation in five years, you should submit your prospectus in the late spring or early summer, shortly after your exam. You would then want to be discussing your prospectus with your oral committee chair during the spring semester.

The other two lists should be structured as historical period surveys, or as one historical survey and one theory survey. One survey might focus on the same period of the potential dissertation topic or area of specialization, but be expanded in a way to demonstrate scope and coverage (should you have a dissertation-topic list on modernist poetry, for example, another list might focus on modernist prose, or should you have a dissertation-topic list on sixteenth-century drama, another list might focus on Renaissance English poetry and politics). A third list might focus on a historically continuous period (so that a modernist might have a list on nineteenth-century or late twentieth-century literature, an early modernist might have a list on classical and medieval texts and traditions), or a contiguous period (someone planning to specialize in nineteenth-century British fiction might also have a list on nineteenth-century American fiction).

**Note: very often, the faculty members who are members of your oral qualifying examination committee will go on to serve on your dissertation committee, but there is no requirement that this be the case. If you want to make changes to your committee, you are free to do so following your qualifying exam. This is likely to occur if any of your examiners**



**specialize in fields outside your dissertation area. Either way, be sure to notify all members involved of your intentions.**

### **Structure and submission of lists**

Each reading list is to be generated in consultation with a faculty member and should have a minimum of twenty (20) primary works and a minimum of five (5) critical or scholarly works. Should you opt to do one list on theory or methodology, there should be at least twenty (20) theoretical works and five (5) literary works (so a list on the history of the book would have at least five texts through which the particular relevance of book history would come into play; a list on postcolonial theory would have at least five literary or cultural texts through which to focus the use and implications of theory for texts).

For formal submission, each reading list should include:

A TITLE: this could be anything from “Nineteenth-Century American Literature” to “Poetics and Architecture” to “Drama and Ecology: Animals, Minerals, and Elements on Stage 1550-1620.”

THE NAME OF FACULTY MEMBER SUPERVISING THE LIST

LIST RATIONALE: a paragraph describing the questions you aim to ask of the list.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY WORKS: a minimum of twenty (20) “primary” and five (5) “secondary” or critical texts, for period or dissertation topic lists.

### **Timetable for preparation and examination**

PhD Supervised Reading Lists are due on the Friday before Spring Break of the second year and are to be turned in to the Director of Graduate Studies. As you assemble your lists, here are some dates to keep in mind:

in November of the second year:

Talk to the DGS about the process of assembling your reading lists. If you have faculty members in mind whom you can imagine working with on your lists, contact those people to talk through your plans and to secure their participation on your orals committee.

by mid-January of the second year:

Select a chair for your orals committee. Although your examination committee need not overlap with your dissertation committee, it is preferable that you select a committee chair who works in your intended area of specialization and that, in turn, you work on a dissertation-oriented list with him or her. Discuss your ideas for other reading lists with him or her and begin contacting other faculty.

by mid-February of the second year:

Submit your lists to each member of your committee. By the end of this month, send the three finalized lists to your committee chair.

by the Friday before Spring Break of the second year:

Submit your three reading lists, along with the PhD Supervised Reading List Approval Form (available on the department's graduate homepage), to the English Graduate Office.

### **Structure of the supervised reading meetings**

Faculty practice varies widely, but you should expect to meet (in person or electronically) with a faculty member a minimum of three times during the semester in which the supervised reading course takes place. Depending on the faculty member with whom you are working, you may be asked to write a response for each session.

### **PhD Qualifying Examination (Orals)**

Oral qualifying exams must be taken by the end of the third week in May (or two weeks after the final day of classes). The exam itself usually lasts about ninety minutes. Each faculty member questions you about his or her list for twenty to thirty minutes. These questions may or may not stem from conversations you have had during your supervised readings, but they will pertain to the readings on your lists and to possible relations between the lists.

Upon successful completion of the examination, your committee members sign the appropriate form that you will have brought to the meeting. If you do not pass your exam, the chair of your exam committee will meet with the DGS to discuss appropriate procedures.

After successfully completing the oral qualifying examination, a student having no previous Master's degree may submit an application to candidacy to the Graduate School for the degree. The graduate secretary in English will assist in the process.

Note: Should you desire to keep working with the same committee after your oral qualifying exam, it is imperative that you explicitly ask the chair and members of your orals committee whether they would be willing to continue serving on your dissertation committee. Most students will begin discussion of their prospectus with committee members in the period immediately following the exam. If your dissertation committee is to be the same as your exam committee, the exam can serve as a convenient opportunity to schedule your dissertation prospectus meeting, since all members will be present.

### **Independent Study Courses and Reading Groups (ENG 600)**

Supervised reading courses (ENG 601) are reserved specifically as preparation for the PhD qualifying examination. In contrast, **independent study courses** (ENG 600) involve working closely with faculty members in a field or on a topic where little or no coursework is offered. After approaching the individual faculty member with whom you wish to work, you must submit a proposal to the Director of Graduate Studies that lays out the justification for the independent study course and provides a list of readings and assignments to be covered. The supervising faculty member must sign this proposal, before the student turns it in to the DGS by the last of classes of the preceding semester. Note: independent study courses may be taken only for extensive credit.

**Reading Groups** constitute another way of satisfying some portion of your requirements. If you are interested in studying a subject that is either absent from or under-represented in existing course offerings, you can find other students who want to study the same subject and form a reading group. You will need to find a faculty sponsor (you register for independent study credit with this faculty member) and you and the other students then draw up a reading list in consultation with this sponsor. You will hold regular meetings (usually eight or so) over the course of the semester in which the reading group meets and the faculty sponsor will meet with the group on two or three occasions over that period of time.

You will need to submit your proposal for a Reading Group to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval by the last day of class the preceding semester. Sample proposals are available for perusal in the English Graduate Office. The Reading Groups proposal form is available on the department's graduate homepage. Note: Reading Groups may be taken only for extensive credit.

## **The Dissertation**

### **Choosing a dissertation topic**

It is never too early to start thinking about a field of specialization, but do not feel that you have to come up with a potential dissertation topic as soon as you arrive in the program. You should plan to experiment in every sense: in the types of classes you take, in the critical and theoretical approaches you use, and in the fields of interest you explore.

The best dissertation topics make an intervention in or a decisive contribution to a field and have a definite, often contentious relationship to that field. If you chose to write about a particular theme, you have to offer a particular, clear, and concrete argument about that theme.

### **Choosing a dissertation committee**

You will typically choose your dissertation committee from faculty members whose seminars you have taken and who work in or closest to your field of study. These are often the people you had on the PhD qualifying examination committee, but need not be. The chair of your dissertation committee should be in the main field in which you are working. In addition, faculty members who are squarely in your field will be likely to help you network in that field when you go on the market.

Note: You must keep the Graduate Office updated on any changes to your committee. Contact the DGS directly if you make a committee change between the oral exam and dissertation prospectus meeting, or in the midst of writing the dissertation.

### **Writing the dissertation prospectus**

Upon completion of the qualifying examination in the spring of your third year, you have ninety days to submit a dissertation prospectus to your three committee members. During these three

months, you should be in contact with your committee chair about drafting the prospectus. A good prospectus articulates your thesis, communicates a sense of the structure and development of the proposed dissertation, emphasizes in what respects the project intervenes in debates in your field, and includes a bibliography of your completed or intended reading in the field. The prospectus should also include summaries of each chapter, as well as potential chapter titles. The Graduate School does not specify a length for prospectus, but a minimum of ten (10) pages is a sensible rule of thumb. Your prospectus is due to the full committee no later than August 25th, at the start of the fourth year.

### **The prospectus meeting**

Once you submit your proposal, schedule a meeting with the members of your dissertation committee to get their feedback. This meeting will be approximately one hour long. Should your proposal be accepted at this meeting, have your dissertation advisor sign off on the PhD Dissertation Proposal Approval Form (available on the department's graduate homepage) and submit it and the proposal to the English Graduate Office. If your committee feels that you need to revise the proposal, do so as swiftly as you can and submit the proposal to the English Graduate Office once it is approved.

Note on deadlines: the dissertation prospectus meeting must take place **by October 1st of the fourth year**. If it does not, students will not be eligible to apply to teach literature courses for the following year and, depending on circumstances, risk falling out of "good standing." Should a student not have an approved prospectus by October 1st, it is his or her obligation to go to the DGS and dissertation committee chair to determine how to move forward with this requirement and return to "good standing" as quickly as possible.

### **Writing the dissertation and advising**

The type of advising you receive from faculty members during your coursework and the writing of your dissertation will vary according to a range of factors, including time constraints, need, and the temperament of the parties involved. With that said, both parties in the advising relationship should observe a more or less informal set of rules:

- keep in touch: let your advisor and committee members know what is happening.
- give plenty of notice: let your committee members know when you are planning to send them work.
- be prompt: both parties should make every effort to respond to communications without undue delay.

The standard dissertation is around 200 pages long and should engage the ongoing critical conversation in its field. It should make an original contribution to the discipline.

Note on deadlines: students who turn in a completed draft of a first chapter by **the Friday before Spring Break of their fourth year** will be eligible to apply for the Opler-Doubrava Fifth-Year Fellowship and will maintain their eligibility for fifth-year teaching of a literature class. Those who do not turn in a drafted chapter by this deadline will not be eligible for either opportunity.

Any student who still does not have a finished prospectus by the Friday before Spring Break of the fourth year will also lose his or her TAsip for the coming (fifth) year.

### **The dissertation and the job market**

Students with a completed or almost completed dissertation have a distinct advantage on the market, and there are good reasons for this: new full-time faculty need to be thinking about their first book, not their dissertations. The best time to go on the market is the year that you know with certainty that you will finish and have defended within six months of a job interview. If you are on a five-year track in the department, plan to have finished at least one half of your dissertation by the beginning of your fifth year. Do not hesitate to write a shorter dissertation: better to defend a suggestive four-chapter dissertation, find employment at a higher salary, and revise the project into a book, than to insist on writing a long dissertation. Contact the Director of Placement the spring before you go on the market, and plan to begin work on materials in the summer. Take into consideration that the preparation of job application materials is very time-consuming.

### **The dissertation defense**

When you are preparing for the dissertation defense, you need to remember that you are working to meet a date set by UB's Graduate School (not the English Department) for the conferral of the degree (there are three such dates in each academic year). In order to give yourself plenty of time to meet that deadline, you need to schedule your defense **at least one month before** the M-form is due in the Graduate School (approximately 1.5 months before the conferral date). Doing this should give you time to make any changes to your dissertation that your committee asks for at the defense, before you file the final version with the Graduate School. Similarly, in order to give your committee members enough time to read the dissertation before the defense, you need to submit the completed dissertation to your committee **at least one month before** the scheduled dissertation defense date. **Providing your committee with this time is both a practical necessity and a professional courtesy.**

There are three conferral dates for each year: June 1, September 1, and February 1. The deadline for the dissertation and M-form to arrive at the Graduate School is approximately two weeks before the conferral date.

Note: as of June 1, 2018, the Graduate School mandates open access to all graduate theses and dissertations filed at UB, through the university's Institutional Repository. Students have the right to embargo their dissertations for up to two years after the filing date, with one opportunity to renew the embargo. The English Graduate Office **strongly recommends** that all PhD students request the maximum embargo period. Please ask the English Graduate Office for the form used to make this request.

## TEACHING

### Professional Training

#### ENG 599 (Year 1)

In the second semester of the first year, PhD students will take ENG 599 “Introduction to Rhetoric and Writing Studies.” This is the program’s only required research seminar, designed to introduce students to the fields of Rhetoric and Writing Studies and providing an overview of the field and its defining debates. The course will provide a valuable disciplinary foundation for teaching (in Year 2) and will lay a foundation in RWS that students may complement with other courses during their time in the program. The materials introduced in 599 will ground students in the disciplinary discourse of RWS, a valuable experience for those pursuing writing-focused jobs on the academic job market.

#### Teaching Observations (Year 1)

In the second semester of the first year, in preparation for their teaching the following year, students will be able to observe upper-level graduate students teaching ENG 105.

#### 105 Practicum (Year 2)

This practicum provides weekly support for new instructors of ENG 105, UB’s introduction to writing course. The practicum comprises meetings with a community of people all teaching 105 at UB for the first time. It is structured to provide time for discussions and lesson planning, managing peer review, mutual class observation, and individual syllabus development. Please note that 100 minutes of meeting time are allotted each week, though the entirety of that time may not always be used.

#### CL2 Practicum (Year 3)

The Communication Literacy 2 Practicum must be completed either before or during a student’s first CL2 teaching in the department. It will be offered as a two-credit course that will offer weekly support to students during their CL2 teaching. In it, students will develop syllabi, assignments, and activities for future upper-level writing courses (e.g., Professional Writing, Technical Writing). The practicum will examine the concepts that inform the teaching of writing, such as writing across the curriculum (WAC), the writing enriched curriculum (WEC), writing about writing (WAW), and transfer. In the process, it will apply these concepts to the day-to-day management and planning of CL2 courses.

### Teaching responsibilities

Students entering in Fall 2021 will begin teaching English 105 in the fall of their second year in the program. You will teach at least three semesters of 105 with the goal of gaining some mastery of that course in the first two years of teaching. Students then will be eligible to apply to teach CL2 courses and a single 200-level literature course (during year 4). Occasionally students

are offered the opportunity to serve as the TA for a large lecture course. Teaching in years 3, 4, and 6 will include a mixture of 105, CL2, and literature course teaching.

### **Teaching mentors**

In the fall of their first year in the program, students will be assigned a Teaching Mentor from among the faculty. During your first two years, this faculty member will observe your teaching twice, the first time in the spring of your first year. It is your responsibility to contact your advisor to set up a time for this observation in the spring of your first year and any time during your second year. Send your advisor your syllabus in advance, and any materials that you may be discussing on the day of the observation. It is your advisor's responsibility to observe, offer constructive feedback, and submit a short set of written comments to you, the DGS, and the Director of the Academic and Professional Writing Program shortly after the observation.

### **Teaching assignment procedures**

By mid-September, a list of potential teaching assistantships and grading positions for large lecture courses will be circulated. Initial applications to serve in either of these positions, or to teach CL2s or 200-level literature courses will be due on or around October 1. (A specific deadline will be posted each year.) Eligible students will be asked to identify which course or courses they wish to teach. If relevant (i.e. for ENG207 and certain teaching assistantships) they will also be asked to identify any particular qualifications they might have to fill the position they have requested. Assignments will be made on the bases of seniority, expertise, and programmatic needs. With the exception of ENG207, these decisions will be made by the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of the Academic and Professional Writing Program in close consultation with the Assistant to the Chair. Instruction for ENG207 will be decided by the Director of Creative Writing.

Syllabi for literature courses will be should be developed in close consultation with advisors. In addition, the Director of Undergraduate Studies will offer a workshop on syllabus writing for literature courses at the beginning of the spring semester. Syllabi will be due to the Director of Undergraduate Studies on or around April 1. (A specific deadline will be posted each year.) Syllabi for literature courses should be accompanied by an advisor's signature

Syllabi for CL2 courses should be developed in close consultation with the Director of the Academic and Professional Writing Program. Syllabi will be due to the Director of the APWP on or around April 1. (A specific deadline will be posted each year.)

The Undergraduate Review Committee will meet soon after this deadline to evaluate all literature syllabi, provide feedback, and award the Riverrun Awards for best syllabi. In exceptional cases, the committee will ask a student to rewrite her or his syllabus.

The Department's award for outstanding literature syllabus will be awarded in the spring semester. The DUS will provide yearly information on this award.

### Winter and Summer Teaching

The deadline for winter teaching requests is May 30.

The deadline for summer teaching requests is Nov. 1.

The Director of Undergraduate Studies will make assignments on the basis of seniority, expertise, and programmatic needs.

### **Last-minute teaching priorities**

Occasionally, teaching opportunities become available in the last few weeks before the semester begins. In deciding who should be offered these opportunities, the Director of the Academic and Professional Writing Program will adhere to the following priorities:

- TAs will always be given the first right of refusal for courses. They will teach no more than one course per semester.
- Students in their 6th year will be approached if there are no TAs available. They will teach no more than two courses per semester, except in extraordinary circumstances. Ordinarily, students will only be approached if they are known to live in the area. If students who have moved out of the area wish to be considered for such opportunities, it is their responsibility to inform the Director of the APWP.
- If all local 6th years are teaching a 2/2 load or have expressed a decision not to take on adjunct work, long-term adjuncts will be approached. The assumption is that long-term adjuncts will teach no more than a 2/2 load, except in extraordinary circumstances.
- If all long-term adjuncts are teaching a 2/2 load (or have expressed a decision not to take on adjunct work), graduate students in year 7 and above will be offered teaching.

Exceptions may be made by the Director of the APWP, but only in extraordinary circumstances (for example, a course becomes available a few days before the beginning of the semester), and in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies.

### **Online teaching**

Ordinarily, on-line teaching is reserved for summer and winter term courses. However, in extraordinary situations (the birth of a child, a significant health issue, etc.), the Director of the APWP, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, may choose to allow a given student to teach a term-time course on-line.

Note: students teaching in any area of the program are eligible to apply for an Excellence in Teaching Award, which is given through the Graduate School. Successful applications depend on excellence in teaching several courses, not on having taught a particular kind of course (e.g., literature) or on any single set of evaluations. The Assistant Director of the Academic and Professional Writing Program will work with you on gathering materials and preparing a strong application, beginning in late October or early November. For additional information, see the “Department Fellowships and Teaching Awards” listing on the English Department’s homepage.



**Note about health insurance coverage and changes to appointment status: when the appointment status of doctoral students shifts from TA to adjunct or from adjunct to TA, at any stage during their graduate career, the change results in a non-negotiable gap in health insurance coverage of 42 days. This gap is caused when students move from one bargaining unit to another, and it occurs whether they are due to hold a full or half-TA line. When the change occurs going into the fall semester, the break in continuity of insurance coverage is the full 42-day period; when the change occurs going into the spring semester, the effects of the gap are less severe because of the mid-year transition.**

For this reason, it is strongly recommended that all students – but especially those with acute long-term or ongoing coverage needs or those with dependents – **arrange for changes in appointment status to happen between semesters.** In other words, always try to have changes to appointment status occur between the fall and spring semesters. Students with grave needs should contact the Director of Graduate Studies during the final semester of their guaranteed TA support (typically, in the tenth semester), in order that there is adequate time to coordinate teaching schedules and protect continuity of coverage to the maximum degree. As always, matters related to student health will be handled with discretion.

## **PREPARING FOR THE ACADEMIC JOB MARKET**

**Please note: This is a very brief overview of the academic job market. For more detailed information, please see the Job Handbook.**

### **Publications**

You should aim to have at least one article in a peer-reviewed journal accepted for publication by the fall you enter the job market. Although you do not need to have an accepted publication in order to get a job, having one will substantially broaden your job market possibilities.

If an opportunity arises to review a book in your field, you should take it – this will get you a free book, a publication to list on your cv, and some experience in writing and publishing. Some journals accept unsolicited reviews; others do not. You can find out by writing to the editors.

### **Conferences**

It is good to attend conferences during your time in graduate school, but be selective. Aim to attend the most important conferences in your field (ask your advisers about this), rather than graduate student conferences, which count for very little on the job market. Also do not spend too much time going to conferences. When you are on the market, two conferences are worth as much as ten: search committees simply want to see that you are interested in being part of current conversations in your field. By the fall of the job market, you should have attended (at most) four or five conferences, two at the national or international level.

At present, the English Department is able to provide up to \$500 for graduate student use to travel to conferences, attend limited-term academic or professional development programs, or visit archival repositories. The Director of Graduate Studies will put out calls for applications in the fall (for upcoming spring and early summer travel) and spring (for upcoming late summer and fall travel) of each academic year. Funding awards will be made by the Director of Graduate Studies (and, as need be, in consultation with a selection committee of two additional tenure-line faculty) on the bases of quality and need.

### **The Academic Job Market**

The Director of Placement will organize a number of workshops and information sessions every year. You may attend these the year before you plan to go on the market, in order to help prepare yourself appropriately. We have created a separate Job Market Handbook, now available online. You might skim through this early on during your time at UB – to give yourself a sense of some expectations down the road. One of the best ways to prepare for the job market is to attend talks and lectures in a wide variety of fields, especially by emerging scholars and junior faculty, and read journals in your field.

### **Beyond the Academic Job Market**

The Director of Placement is prepared to work with students searching for jobs beyond the academy. Please talk to the Director of Placement or the DGS as early in the program as possible. We may help you to move toward the appropriate campus and alumni resources.

## **OTHER ASPECTS OF GRADUATE STUDY**

### **Applying for Internal and External Fellowships**

Students finishing dissertations are strongly encouraged to apply for both internal and external fellowship support. Although most fellowship support is for completing dissertations, there are a number of funding sources that may be useful along the way. See the fellowship page on the English department's graduate homepage for more information.

### **Graduate Groups**

Within your first year at UB, you should, if possible, become involved with the Graduate Groups in the fields closest to your interests. Some of these groups are organized within the department; others, which include both students and faculty, are organized through the Humanities Institute. Typically, these groups invite outside speakers, hold colloquia, and organize work-in-progress sessions. Many of these groups are interdepartmental and interdisciplinary. Participating in these groups will enable you to become acquainted with graduate students and faculty from UB and elsewhere who have similar intellectual interests. There is also an English Graduate Students Association (EGSA) in which many students participate.

### **Responsible Research Conduct (RCR)**

The Graduate School now requires graduate students to complete the RCR training within the first three years of the PhD program. The electronic test is brief, approximately 30 minutes. The final page indicating a passing grade (80% or better) should be printed and placed in your file in 302 Clemens. We recommend that students complete this test before their first semester in the program. The Graduate School link is: <http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/policies/phd.php#conduct>.

## **LEAVES DURING GRADUATE STUDY**

### **Leaves of Absence (LOAs)**

There are numerous personal reasons for taking a LOA, and you may do so for either a semester or a year. If you are on a Presidential or Dean's Fellowship, you will be able to take up to a year and reserve your fellowship money for your return. While TAs will not need to give up guaranteed teaching semesters while on leave, a student wanting to resume teaching must inform the DGS and Director of Composition and Teaching Fellows by March 15 of the year prior to resuming. It is expected that all guaranteed teaching semesters will have been used by the end of the student's sixth year

### **Maternity Leave**

There is no maternity leave per se offered to graduate students at UB, but we in the department work with you to ensure your continued success in the program. Please contact the DGS to discuss course and leave planning.