

# **Graduate Student Handbook**

**English Department  
2022-2023**

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# ENGLISH DEPARTMENT GRADUATE HANDBOOK

## Introduction

Welcome to the English Department at Johns Hopkins. We hope that this handbook, along with information on our website, will make it easy for you to navigate the Department in the coming weeks and years.

### **Homewood Graduate Student Handbook**

The Graduate Board (the equivalent of what is called the Graduate Division at some universities) produces the **Homewood Graduate Student Handbook**. This online handbook is the primary guide for all graduate students in both the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences and the Whiting School of Engineering. It contains details regarding School-wide and University policies, procedures, and graduate student program requirements at Hopkins, as well as valuable information about making one's way around Baltimore.

The Graduate Board website can be found at:

<http://homewoodgrad.jhu.edu/>

The **Homewood Graduate Student Handbook** can be found on the web at:

<http://homewoodgrad.jhu.edu/academics/policies/>

### **English Department Graduate Student Handbook**

The information we're including in this handbook will give you a sense of how the general Graduate Board regulations play out in English Department policies and what you'll encounter as you're earning your Ph.D. in the Department.

We've tried to provide information that follows the sequence of the program. Thus, we've included information about taking courses before any remarks about the teaching you'll do. You'll want, however, to read through the entire document so as to be alert to possibilities that you might use at any time (such as the funding for travel to conferences or research libraries) and so as to plan your progress through the program.

## Notable Faculty, Staff, and Organizations

### Faculty Administrators

The faculty and staff job descriptions below reflect only those parts of the positions that relate to the graduate program.

Department Chair  
Mark Thompson  
Mthomp59@jhu.edu

Oversees, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, all policies pertaining to the graduate program. Decides, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Director of Undergraduate Studies, about departmental recommendations of students to teach courses in Intersession and Summer Session, the Dean's Teaching Fellowship, and departmental teaching opportunities for students past the fifth year.

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)  
Andrew Miller  
ahm@jhu.edu

Oversees, in consultation with the Chair and Department faculty, all policies pertaining to the graduate program. Serves as the primary advisor for all graduate students in their first two years in the Ph.D. program, conferring with them about their course selections and, later, their assignments as teaching assistants and their plans for oral examinations;

Decides, in consultation with Chair and Director of Undergraduate Studies, about departmental recommendations of students to teach courses in intersession and summer session, the Dean's Teaching Fellowship, and departmental teaching opportunities for students past the fifth year;

Prepares the official departmental recommendation of candidates for the Dean's Teaching Fellowships and sends it to the Dean's Office;

Serves as the chair of graduate admissions;

Approves requests for reimbursement for attending conferences.

Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS)  
Sharon Achinstein  
Sachins1@jhu.edu

Decides, in consultation with Chair and Director of Graduate Studies, about departmental recommendations of students to teach courses in intersession and

summer session, the Dean's Teaching Fellowship, and departmental teaching opportunities for students past the fifth year.

### **Departmental Staff**

Administrative Manager

Sally Hauf

shauf@jhu.edu

410-516-4313

Processes all departmental payroll; resolves payroll issues; Processes graduate student tuition and fees so that student accounts are up-to-date; resolves issues; Processes approved reimbursements; Handles facilities issues (including distributing keys, supplies for graduate student lounge, etc);

Works with Tudor and Stuart curator on room scheduling, AV needs, contacting speakers for honorarium and reimbursement information, and making lodging reservations;

Works with third-year graduate students on scheduling ELH talks, contacting speakers for honorarium and reimbursement information, and making lodging reservations;

Makes and oversees arrangements with caterers for departmental events.

Senior Academic Program Coordinator

Dominique Dureau

ddureau1@jhu.edu

410-516-4311

Coordinates meetings of graduate students and DGS;

Schedules departmental oral examinations and dissertation defenses; Schedules graduate and undergraduate courses;

Returns teaching evaluations to graduate students; Maintains student files and completes necessary forms for the awarding of degrees; Updates Department website;

Coordinates prospective students' visits.

IT Specialist: Timothy Giglitto

timothy@jhu.edu

410-516-3362

Advises the Department about departmental computer equipment;  
Assists graduate students with IT questions.

## **Library Contact**

Research Librarian: Heidi Herr (Eisenhower Library)  
hherr1@jhu.edu 410-516-8540

Consults with graduate students about library research tools.

## **Affiliated Program Contacts**

### *University Writing Program*

Program Website: <http://krieger.jhu.edu/writing-program>

Director: Matthew Pavesich  
mpavesi2@jhu.edu

Conducts workshops in the spring and summer for students teaching in UWP;  
Supervises and evaluates the work of students teaching in UWP;  
Selects students past the fifth year to teach in UWP.

Senior Administrative Coordinator: Devon White  
dwhit113@jhu.edu

## **English Graduate Student Association**

Graduate students are members of the English Graduate Student Association (EGSA); the EGSA has three spokespeople officers usually from different classes. They convey information about issues of concern to the Department Chair and the DGS, and let the Department know if there are any questions that students would like to see addressed. They receive opinions about job candidates from their fellow students, and pass these along to the Chair and DGS.

Once a year, usually in the early part of the spring semester, the DGS and Chair meet with the assembled graduate students of the Department to discuss issues of general concern (which have, in the past, included questions about things such as the Department's hiring priorities and fellowship stipends).

## **Homewood Graduate Representative Organization**

The Homewood Graduate Representative Organization addresses questions of concern to graduate students from across the Departments at the Homewood campus.

## **General Program Information and Requirements**

### **Mentoring**

While this handbook provides general information about the program, students are also advised through their time in the department by a sequence of mentors.

Before registering for the first semester, the DGS meets with all the first year students individually to answer questions about particular courses and requirements ahead of the registration period opening (usually in late July). Then, the DGS meets with the new students as a group for orientation the week before the first semester to go over the program.

For the first two years of students' time in the program, they each have two faculty mentors: the DGS and another departmental faculty member. They are also informally mentored by advanced graduate students. Members of this mentoring team (other than the DGS) may be replaced if needed (e.g., if on leave) or if the student desires it. Discussions with the DGS will have begun before the fall semester of students' first year; initial meetings with other mentors should take place early in that semester. First year students also must schedule a meeting with staff members in the Office of Integrated Learning and Life Design, and should discuss that meeting with their mentoring team.

Student relations with this team may carry over into years three through six, but official mentoring in these later years is performed by each student's dissertation adviser and second reader. Both of these faculty members are consulted in the formation of the dissertation prospectus, participate in the prospectus conference described below, and are available for reading and commentary throughout the dissertation process.

### **Coursework**

By the end of the third year, students must have completed twelve courses. They are free to adjust the course load from semester to semester, and to take courses in English or in other departments, provided that the twelve course target is reached by the spring of their third year. At least eight courses out of the required total are to be taken within the Department (courses listed as AS.060.xxx), and of the courses taken in the department, four are required:

- a) The departmental proseminar, taken in the first year
- b) An independent study course for the preparation of exams, taken in the fall of the third year
- c) One seminar focused on pre-1800 literature
- d) One seminar focused on global or minority literature.

Exceptions require DGS approval.

All graduate courses in the Department are seminars, and enrollments are capped at eight. Once that cap is reached, students must secure the permission of the instructor to be admitted to a course.

During their career in the department, students develop skills in a range of professional genres, including seminar papers, articles conference papers, book reviews, syllabi, critical bibliographies, and the introduction of speakers. To facilitate this, faculty teaching graduate seminars may take either of two approaches to written work: the pro-seminar approach or the regular seminar approach. Students taking the course as a regular seminar prepare a final seminar paper of roughly twenty-five to thirty-five pages. Those taking the course as a pro-seminar submit several shorter assignments in different genres. Students' choices of seminar format depend on the approval of the faculty member teaching the course.

Faculty in the Department typically ask each student enrolled in a course (and any auditors) to make at least one class presentation in the course of the semester, though assignments will vary by instructor. Presentations give students a chance to develop thinking about the course materials under discussion in a particular week and to launch class discussion with fellow seminar participants.

Students may arrange with individual professors for extensions on work for seminars, but they should plan to resolve any incompletes on their records in a timely manner. The Graduate Board requires that a student complete all the work for a course within a year of the end of the semester in which the student received a grade of incomplete, but the Department encourages students to resolve incompletes more rapidly.

Students must have satisfactorily completed twelve courses as described above and fulfilled their language requirements before taking their oral examinations.

### **Language requirement**

Students are required to demonstrate that they have fluent knowledge of one foreign language or competence in two foreign languages. The ideal is for students to develop the capacity to read both primary and secondary literature in a foreign language and to acquaint themselves with relevant scholarship in their area of specialization. At the beginning of each semester, and by request, the Department offers translation exams. Faculty select a passage for the exam. Students are allowed free use of a dictionary during the exam, and are given two hours for the completion of the translation.

Students may also satisfy the language requirement by achieving a grade of A in a semester-long reading course for graduate students (regularly provided by the Department of Modern Language and Literature) or by completing other course work that the DGS deems suitable.

## Examinations and Prospectus Preparation

Scholarship in the third year of the program is devoted to the transition from seminar study to dissertation work. This transition is supported by an examination sequence in the fall, and a dissertation prospectus workshop in the spring. The DGS will meet with students in the spring of their second year to choose an examiner for their exam sequence and two readers for their dissertation prospectus.

During the fall exam sequence students complete a preliminary critical survey of a broad field, whether established or emergent, in which they feel confident they will work in the future. The goal of the sequence is to confirm students' competence to teach in that field.

The first step in the sequence is an independent study course, taken in the fall semester, and designed to prepare their exam materials. The development of these materials is done independently, but in consultation with a faculty member and where possible advanced graduate students. In early December of that year, students submit a field bibliography and field paper, and then take an oral exam.

The bibliography should include a sufficient number of primary and secondary texts to sketch the field's historical and generic range, its conceptual limits, and the critical approaches needed for understanding its current configuration.

The field paper is a synthetic work of 20-30 pages. Unlike seminar papers, it is not modeled on the article form, and typically does not include original scholarship. Nor does it present a plan for dissertation research. Instead, building on the field bibliography, on work completed in seminar, and on conversations with faculty, the field paper prepares students to teach in their field and to begin work on their dissertation prospectus.

The oral exam takes the bibliography and paper as its point of departure, thus grounding the discussion in work that students have already completed. Discussion of syllabi may be a component of this exam.

Successful completion of the bibliography, field paper, and oral exam are required for progress to the spring prospectus workshop. Students who do not pass any section of the oral examination will be asked to take that section of exam again within eight weeks. A student may retake the exam only once.

After the completion of the exam sequence, students compile a dissertation bibliography in consultation with both their readers; this bibliography should build from their field bibliography and include the core primary, secondary, and theoretical texts for their dissertation. This bibliography should be completed before the spring semester begins.

In the spring semester students participate in the dissertation prospectus workshop, directed by the DGS in consultation with each student's adviser and reader. By the end of April of the spring semester, each student must submit a brief (2500-3000 word) prospectus to their adviser and second reader. This prospectus defines their dissertation's

subject, frames its research questions and methodological commitments, and outlines a possible chapter structure. Once it has been submitted, students meet in formal conference with their readers. The aim of the conference is to ensure that students have a topic substantial and significant enough to support extended research, are aware of the possibilities and obstacles of their project, and know where to begin and how to proceed.

After students have successfully passed the examination sequence and had their prospectus approved, they are advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. The remaining requirements for the PhD are 1) the completion of a dissertation that the students' first and second readers approve; 2) the successful defense of that dissertation at the Graduate Board oral examination (see "Dissertation" below); 3) the presentation of a Journal Club talk; and 4) the completion of teaching responsibilities.

## **Dissertation**

Each third-year student identifies a faculty member who will agree to serve as her/his/their primary director for dissertation work. In consultation with that director, the student also selects a second reader (typically another member of the English faculty, but sometimes a faculty member from another Department).

As part of the application for advanced funding and the Department's regular reviews, directors report to the DGS on their advisees' progress.

Once the first and second readers have approved the dissertation, a public Graduate Board Oral Examination is scheduled. The Examination needs to be scheduled at least six weeks in advance. Three weeks before the Examination, students must provide five copies of the dissertation to the Senior Academic Coordinator, for distribution to the Examination committee members. These should be in hard copy and not forwarded as email attachments.

The first and second readers serve on the Graduate Board oral examining committee, as do three faculty members from other Departments. Students may invite members of the public to attend.

The website for the Graduate Board has full instructions on the format and deadline for submitting dissertations to the library once they have been accepted and successfully defended. (Students usually discover a few typographical errors between the time they provide their dissertations to the examiners for the Board Oral exam and the time they submit them to the library. The Graduate Board allows a short interval in which to make appropriate corrections.)

## **Journal Club**

The Department hosts a lecture series in which advanced graduate students present portions of their dissertation as formal public lectures to the faculty and students of the Department. These lectures are typically scheduled for the fall semester, so that any

student who is a candidate for an academic position will have the opportunity to test out a particular lecture before delivering it on a campus visit. Presentation of a Journal Club talk is a requirement for the Ph.D. degree in English at Johns Hopkins, and students should plan to fulfill it even if they have already taken up positions.

## Teaching and Employment

### Teaching Assistantships

Pedagogical training is a central task of the department. To facilitate that training, the department requires a series of activities across the first three years of students' careers.

In the spring semester of their first year, each student serves as an apprentice to a current graduate student TA. This apprenticeship includes attendance at the staff meetings, lectures, and discussion sections for at least two weeks. By the end of that semester, students must write a brief (one page) description of their experience, and use that document as the basis for conversations with the TA and course director.

In the second year, each student serves as a departmental teaching assistant (TA). TAs attend course lectures, grade papers and exams, confer with their students about papers, and hold one section meeting each week for discussion of course materials. Enrollment in the sections is usually capped at twenty. In the fall term, the Director of Undergraduate Studies conducts an orientation session for all first-time teaching assistants. During each term, TAs are required to engage in recurrent, scheduled discussions with other TAs, first-year apprentices, and the course director; give one lecture; meet with the Graduate Student Teaching Support Specialist (GSTSS) at CER; and have the GSTSS and the course director visit their class at least once. At the end of each semester, students write a description of their experience, including a self-assessment, for discussion with the course director and for their use in future teaching

When conferring with the DGS in the spring of their first year and in the fall of their second year, students will be asked to indicate their preferred teaching assignments; the DGS will accommodate those preferences as much as possible.

In the fall of the third year, students typically do not teach, devoting their time to exam preparation.

In the spring of the third year, each student is expected to teach in the University Writing Program (UWP). This program principally serves freshmen but its courses are open to other undergraduate students as well. Participation in UWP preparatory workshops is required of all students scheduled to teach UWP in the coming year. For more information about the University Writing Program, visit their website at: <http://krieger.jhu.edu/writing-program>

Students do not teach in their fourth year, but are expected to concentrate exclusively on their dissertation. If students would prefer to delay the dissertation year until the fifth year, they can do so with the permission of the DGS and in consultation with the Director of the UWP.

In the fifth year, each student is expected to teach in the UWP.

Students may apply in their sixth year for advanced funding from the Department. If available, it will provide for a UWP course, a Department course, or a TA-ship for one or two semesters. Students apply for advanced funding in late January of the preceding year.

### **The Dean's Teaching Fellowship**

The Dean's Teaching Fellowship (DTF) offers students a chance to develop proposals for seminars that will be listed as courses in the Department. Graduate students who have completed all their course work are eligible to apply. The DTF award is for one semester. An application consists of a course proposal and a letter of recommendation from a faculty member (generally a student's first reader), with the faculty member agreeing to act as a sponsor to the student's teaching and to observe one class meeting if the course should be chosen as a DTF course. The DGS, the DUS, and the Chair will review all the proposals submitted and forward all approved proposals to the Dean's Office. (The Department has usually approved all the proposals submitted.) The DGS sends a letter of endorsement to the Dean's Office in which he/she details the strengths of the various proposals and highlights their contribution to the Department's course offerings. The selection committee for the Dean's Teaching Fellowship (which consists of faculty from a number of different Departments) then reviews all the proposals, selects candidates for interviews, and makes decisions about awards. The Dean's Office announces the deadline for the DTF each fall. Typically, however, proposals have been due to the DGS in the middle of October, a week before they must be submitted to the Dean's Office.

Graduate students may consult prior successful DTF applications, which are kept in the Department office.

### **Additional Teaching Opportunities**

There are additional teaching opportunities available through special application to various programs, including the Center for Africana Studies, the Jewish Studies Program, and the Program for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. Students applying for teaching fellowships in those programs should consult with the DGS before submitting applications.

Finally, graduate students may apply to tutor in the Writing Center, or to serve as the Directorship of the Center. The Director is responsible for the management of the Writing Center, hiring and training staff, and representing the Writing Center to the University as a whole.

### **Additional Graduate Student Positions**

Tudor and Stuart Curator:

Each year one student from the third-year class works as Tudor and Stuart Curator. The Curator contacts the speakers who have accepted the Chair's invitations to speak in the Tudor and Stuart lecture series, and makes sure that all travel and hotel arrangements are

in order. She/he/they also send/s out regular announcements of the lectures, work/s with the Administrative Manager and caterers to make arrangements for the reception after the lecture, and handle/s invitations to faculty for dinner with the speaker. (There is a Tudor and Stuart Curator checklist which will guide the curator through the different responsibilities). This position carries a modest stipend.

The T&S Curator is appointed for one year. In the spring, the DGS circulates a message to all members of the second-year class to determine how many students are interested in applying for the position, and (in consultation with the Chair) selects from among the self-declared candidates. Service in this position does not replace any program requirements.

*ELH* positions:

*ELH* (formerly *English Literary History*) employs two associate editors, who each have two-year terms. The associate editors copy-edit articles and work with their authors. The senior editor of *ELH*, a member of the English Department faculty, circulates a message to all members of the third-year class to invite applicants for the positions, and then selects editors from that pool. One associate editor is selected each year for a two year term; thus there is always one editor with a year's experience.

*ELH* associate editorships take the place of teaching in the fourth and fifth years. *ELH* associate editors are, however, eligible to apply for summer and intersession teaching. *ELH* associate editors typically defer their dissertation year until the end of their *ELH* service.

In addition, *ELH* has in recent years employed a student who handles the circulation of submitted manuscripts to faculty members who serve on the journal's editorial board. This is a work-study position, available at irregular intervals. The senior editor of *ELH* will announce a vacancy when it occurs, and select from among the students who express interest in the position.

## Intellectual Community

### Colloquia and Workshops

The English Department sponsors annual, student-proposed field colloquia, principally devoted to the discussion of student writing. Secondary events may be incorporated--for instance, the collective discussion of important articles or books, or conversations with guest speakers.

Each spring the DGS invites graduate students to propose colloquia for the following year, responsive to the current interests of students and faculty. Their goals include introducing new students to the work of advanced students and faculty, and training students in commenting on and editing the work of others. The colloquia may include members of other departments.

Students are encouraged to form additional workshops for the discussion of pedagogy and dissertation writing; they may apply to the DGS for modest funding to support these groups. Finally, the Counseling Center runs a dissertation-writing support group that draws together students from a variety of different departments.

### Public Lectures

The Department sponsors public lectures and colloquia as a central part of the program. Students are required to attend these events. There are two main speaker series in the Department: The Tudor and Stuart Club series and the *ELH* talk series.

The Tudor and Stuart Club sponsors lectures by prominent faculty from other universities. Everyone in the Department is invited to attend the reception that follows.

Under the auspices of *ELH*, the members of the third-year class issue invitations to faculty from other universities to present pre-circulated papers. For each event, one member of the third-year class is responsible for introducing the visitor. Members of the third-year class have the opportunity to join the visitor for dinner after the *ELH* colloquium.

Departments and programs other than English also offer lectures and colloquia. The departments of Anthropology, History, Modern Languages and Literatures, and Comparative Thought and Literature host events that may be of particular interest to English Department students, as do the Alexander Grass Humanities Institute, the Center for Africana Studies, Jewish Studies, the Political Theory group in Political Science, and the Program for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. Students can consult the events calendars for these departments online and on the Alexander Grass Humanities Institute website.

### **Prospective Students' Visits**

Newly admitted students are invited each spring to visit campus; speak with faculty and current graduate students; and engage in departmental activities, including a lecture by a distinguished scholar invited for the occasion. All graduate students are expected to attend departmental events scheduled during prospectives' visit. The DGS and the Academic Coordinator ask current students to contact individual prospective students in advance of their visits and to meet with those students at various points during their visits.

## **Funding and Evaluation**

All graduate students in the PhD program are fully funded for five years. This funding is provided through a combination of teaching and fellowship awards; for the year-by-year breakdown into teaching and fellowship support, see the “Teaching and Employment” section of this handbook.

After the fifth year, funding is not guaranteed. Such funding after the fifth year, from the Department, will depend on students writing a short application, including a timeline for completion of the dissertation. This application must be supported by a letter of progress from their dissertation director. In addition, advanced students (in fifth and sixth years) can apply for work-study positions in which they earn money for providing research assistance to individual faculty members.

### **Travel to conferences and for research**

Any student can request as much as \$350 each year from the Ballman Fund, a departmental fund that underwrites the expenses that students incur in traveling to conferences or going to libraries to conduct research. Students should submit a brief statement of plans to the DGS, who will forward approved proposals to the Administrative Manager, who will in turn arrange for a student to be reimbursed once she/he/they submit/s receipts for travel expenses.

In addition, the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences funds research through the J. Brien Key Award; the Graduate Representative Organization also awards some travel monies through its competitions. Consult the Graduate Board and GRO websites for further information.

In addition to regular conference and research travel, graduate students expecting job interviews are eligible for up to \$650 for expenses incurred during travel to the annual MLA conference.

The Department will supplement both regular and MLA interview travel with additional funds when possible.

### **Annual evaluation of student progress**

Faculty members confer twice a year about the progress of students in the program. Suggestions are conveyed directly by the DGS to the individual student as needed.

Students meet formally once per year with their faculty advisor to discuss their progress in the program, and define goals for their future work. A form which articulates these goals and tracks productivity is signed by the student and the advisor, and submitted to the department.

## **Academic Probation**

Failure to complete successfully any requirement of the program may result in probation potentially leading to dismissal. For KSAS rules and regulations regarding probation and dismissal, see the Homewood Graduate Student Handbook, found at:

<http://homewoodgrad.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/35/2014/08/Graduate-Student-Probation-Funding-Withdrawal-and-Dismissal-Policy.pdf>

## **Job Placement**

Each student who expects to look for a job should develop a portfolio of materials in consultation with his or her director and the Placement Officer. This portfolio should include a letter of application (in which the candidate describes his/her dissertation, teaching experience, and teaching and research interests); a curriculum vitae; a dissertation abstract; and two chapters of the dissertation. Students may wish to consult examples of application materials that the Program Coordinator has on file.

Each year, one member of the faculty serves as Job Placement Officer. The Job Placement Officer helps prepare students for the job market by reading their materials, scheduling Journal Club talks, and arranging practice job interviews.

Students should submit copies of their job materials to the faculty members from whom they solicit letters of recommendation.

The Department funds an Interfolio account for each graduate student on the job market. Interfolio maintains an electronic dossier for each student, and dispatches them on request. (When students realize that there are insufficient funds in their Interfolio accounts, they may petition the DGS to ask for a supplement.) The Department will fund an Interfolio account for each Ph.D. recipient seeking college or university teaching positions until the recipient gains a tenure-track post.

The Job Information List of the Modern Language Association (to which the Department subscribes) usually becomes available in late September.