



Northeastern University

**College of Social Sciences
and Humanities**

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

**DOCTORAL
PROGRAM GUIDE
2025-2026**

Effective: August 2025

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2025-2026 GRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Professor Mya Poe (m.poe@northeastern.edu)

2025-2026 GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Professor Mya Poe, Chair
Professor Hillary Chute (Fall)
Professor Julia Flanders
Professor Alison Glassie
Professor Nicole Guidotti-Hernandez (Spring)
Professor K.J. Rawson

GRADUATE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Kelsey Costa (ke.costa@northeastern.edu)

GRADUATE OFFICE

413 Lake Hall | 617-373-3692

FORMS, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND FAQs

See <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/english/resources/resources-for-current-grad-students/>.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

All students earning the Ph.D. in English must complete the Ph.D. core curriculum (below), complete yearly Annual Reviews, satisfy the Ph.D. language requirement, pass the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination, file an approved prospectus, give a public presentation in the department, and successfully complete and defend a dissertation.

Refer to the Academic Catalog (<https://registrar.northeastern.edu/group/catalog/>) for complete and official information about university policies, curriculum, and program requirements for all years of entry.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

For students entering with the B.A. in English or equivalent, *effective Fall 2021*

The core curriculum consists of **48 semester hours** (SH) of coursework or roughly 12 courses, including:

▶ **ENGL 5103 PROSEMINAR – 4 SH**

The proseminar, required for all first-year graduate students in English, will introduce students to the history and current scholarly practices of English studies.

▶ **ONE THEORIES AND METHODS course – 4 SH**

Theories and Methods courses include seminars in any area (literature, film, writing and rhetoric, digital humanities) that are organized primarily around one or more theoretical or methodological approaches, practices, or questions.

▶ **ONE or TWO WRITING AND RHETORIC course/s – 4-8 SH**

▶ **TWO to THREE LITERARY AREAS courses – 8-12 SH**

- Literature Pre-1700
- Literature 1700-1900
- Post-1900

▶ **SIX ELECTIVE courses – 24 SH****

**Electives must be ENGL courses unless otherwise approved by the Graduate Studies Committee, including electives taken for graduate certificates. Students seeking to take non-ENGL electives should submit a General Petition Form to the GSC, located on the Current Student Resources webpage. Core courses taken toward a graduate certificate do not require a petition if the certificate has been formally declared.

EN-ROUTE MASTER'S

Ph.D. students who enter the doctoral program without advanced standing earn an en-route master's degree upon successful completion of the curricular requirements for the English M.A.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS (continued)

For students entering with the M.A. in English or equivalent, *effective Fall 2021*

The core curriculum consists of **24 semester hours** (SH) of coursework or roughly six courses, including:

▶ **ENGL 5103 PROSEMINAR – 4 SH***

The proseminar, required for all first-year graduate students in English, will introduce students to the history and current scholarly practices of English studies.

▶ **FIVE ELECTIVE courses – 20 SH****

*Students who completed ENGL 5103 at Northeastern University prior to matriculation into the doctoral program may use an elective to satisfy the SH requirement associated with this core course. Incoming doctoral students with advanced standing may petition the Graduate Studies Committee to opt out of this requirement. Documentation in the form of a syllabus and a transcript demonstrating an equivalent MA-level course must be provided.

**Electives must be ENGL courses unless otherwise approved by the Graduate Studies Committee, including electives taken for graduate certificates. Students seeking to take non-ENGL electives should submit a General Petition Form to the GSC, located on the Current Student Resources webpage. Core courses taken toward a graduate certificate do not require a petition if the certificate has been formally declared.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

The Graduate Program in English offers students enrolled in any of its degree programs the option to complete graduate certificates in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies or Digital Humanities. For more information or to contact a certificate administrator, visit the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (<http://catalog.northeastern.edu/graduate/social-sciences-humanities/interdisciplinary/womens-gender-sexuality-studies-graduate-certificate/>) or Digital Humanities (<http://catalog.northeastern.edu/graduate/social-sciences-humanities/interdisciplinary/digital-humanities-graduate-certificate/>) web pages.

The certificates' requirements will normally match those posted in the [Academic Catalog](#) for the student's year of entry. Students seeking a graduate certificate must complete the course requirements of the certificate prior to meeting coursework requirements for the primary degree program. Certificate coursework cannot extend beyond the point in time when degree requirements are met.

THE EXPERIENTIAL PH.D.

CSSH provides Ph.D. students with new paths to integrate the Social Sciences and Humanities into the public sphere. The Experiential Ph.D. focuses on:

- Meaningful engagement with community partners
- Integrative research experiences related directly to their own scholarly agenda
- Learning to communicate the results of humanistic and social science research to various public audiences
- Opening up career paths outside academia for Ph.D. students after graduation
- Preparing Ph.D. graduates for jobs in universities and colleges of the twenty-first century

Past opportunities in CSSH have included working with archival departments, libraries, museums, digital humanities initiatives, law offices, non-profits, major publications, and more. More information can be found at <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/academics/the-experiential-phd/>.

GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISING

Academic advising is a critical part of a student's experience in the graduate program. **New students are assigned faculty advisors and are welcome to subsequently change advisors as they fine-tune their academic and career objectives.** A list of faculty specialties is provided on pages 28-30.

Advising covers substantive questions in the student's field of study as well as long-term academic and career planning. Students are strongly urged to speak to an advisor before registering for courses each semester. Any change in advisor must be reported to the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Program Coordinator. Once a student completes coursework, the student's committee chair becomes the default faculty advisor.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The required annual review serves as a time for the advisor and student to check in regarding the student's progress in the program and to address any questions or concerns the student or advisor may have about coursework; degree progress; development of teaching, research, and writing skills; intellectual interests; and/or other aspects of the student's education. It is also an opportunity to discuss short- and long-term plans for completing the program and a review of the student's performance in their Stipended Graduate Assistantship. Annual review meetings normally take place in January or early February and documents are typically due in mid-February. More information will be sent to students and advisors during the fall semester.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

PhD students must complete all required coursework with a minimum 3.500 grade-point average. Included in the expectations for meeting academic policies are the timely completion of coursework and consistent communication with department faculty, assigned faculty advisor, and staff. Students who do not meet academic or performance expectations satisfactorily may be at risk for probation and dismissal.

Students looking to take a leave of absence from the university for personal or professional reasons should fill out a request form on the Student Hub **prior** to the semester they wish to take the leave. Students working on dissertation but are away from campus are not eligible for a leave of absence. International students should seek counsel from the Office of Global Services if they wish to take a leave of absence.

More information on academic policies can be found in the academic catalog:

<https://catalog.northeastern.edu/graduate/social-sciences-humanities/general-regulations/regulations-for-all-students/#text>

DOCTORAL PROGRAM LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Ph.D. students must demonstrate proficiency in

- Reading one to two languages other than English or
- Reading one language and one advanced research skill (ARS)

As of Fall 2015, incoming Ph.D. students must satisfy the language requirement **before advancing to candidacy**. It can be satisfied upon entry with proof of qualifying previous coursework or native proficiency.

The Department is able to facilitate exams in French, Spanish, Italian, German, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek; students wishing to satisfy the requirement in a language other than these, including a signed language, should submit a petition to the Graduate Studies Committee. For options 2-5, use the General Petition Form, available on the [Current Student Resources web page](#).

Students may satisfy the language requirement in any of the following six ways:

1. **READING COMPREHENSION EXAMINATION.** A student must pass a language examination provided by the Department of English or the World Languages Center in the Department of Cultures, Societies and Global Studies (CSGS) and evaluated by qualified faculty. Examinations are generally given once each semester; the date will be announced in advance. Students have two hours to translate a passage of 200-250 words, on a topic related to literary studies. Print dictionaries may be used; however, grammar or vocabulary aids such as *501 French Verbs* are not permitted. The examination is evaluated on a pass/fail basis, and students will be notified of the result in writing. Students who do not pass may repeat the examination without penalty. Copies of previous examinations are available upon request from the Graduate Program Coordinator. Evaluation criteria can be found on page 8.
2. **PREVIOUS COURSEWORK.** A student may provide an official transcript demonstrating one year of intermediate-level undergraduate literature (not language) courses (or the equivalent in the case of signed languages) in the language with grades of “B” or higher. The transcript will be evaluated by the Graduate Program Director, and the student will be notified of the result in writing.
3. **PREVIOUS GRADUATE EXAMINATION.** Doctoral students entering with a master’s degree may present evidence of having completed a similar examination at the previous institution, such as an indication on their prior transcript. The request will be evaluated by the Graduate Program Director. Students who completed a language exam for the English M.A. degree at Northeastern University prior to matriculation into the doctoral program can count it towards their doctoral requirements.
4. **NATIVE PROFICIENCY.** A student may petition to have proficiency in a native language other than English count toward satisfaction of the requirement. Petitions and supporting materials will be evaluated by the Graduate Program Director, who may ask the Graduate Studies Committee to assist in evaluating uncertain cases. Students will be notified of the result in writing.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS (continued)

5. **ADVANCED RESEARCH SKILL.** For students planning research projects that require other kinds of advanced research skills (ARS), the language requirement may be met by demonstrating proficiency in a relevant advanced research skill. An ARS would be a research skill that goes beyond the traditional textual analysis techniques taught in English graduate programs. Possible ARS options include text encoding, qualitative coding, geographic information systems, database design, statistical analysis, rhetorical analysis, or computational text analysis. ARS petitions should describe the skill, sample of the skill applied to a dataset, and a description of the skill's relevance to the student's project and identify a faculty member who is able and willing to evaluate the student's proficiency. Upon approval by the GSC, the student is evaluated by the faculty member who will notify the GSC of the outcome.

6. **ANOTHER METHOD, proposed by the student and approved by the advisor and the Graduate Studies Committee.** A few previous examples of this include original translations and discussions of non-English language texts integrated into coursework or the dissertation, a separate paper grappling with the implications of specific word choices of a theoretical text originally authored in a language other than English, or a paper comparing various translations of a text with a discussion of their relationship to the original. Petitions and supporting materials will be evaluated by the Graduate Studies Committee, and students will be notified of the result in writing.

Effective September 2015; Last updated August 2025

GRADUATE PROGRAMS LANGUAGE EXAMINATION EVALUATION

The goal of the reading comprehension examination is to test your competence as a translator of literary and critical works in languages other than English. The exam consists of a two-hour session in which you are asked to translate a passage of 200-250 words. You are allowed to consult a dictionary during the exam; you are not allowed to consult grammar or language guides. While preparing for the exam, you should keep in mind the following guidelines, which will be used to evaluate the exam.

Meaning

Does your translation accurately capture the overall sense of the passage and convey this sense in coherent and meaningful English? Does your translation accurately present the ideas, actions, and concepts of the original text?

Grammar

Is your translation an accurate representation of verb conjugations both in terms of tense and person? Does your translation link pronouns with the proper antecedents? Does your translation account for demonstrative distinctions that appear in the original? Is your translation written in grammatical English?

Vocabulary

Do the English words chosen accurately convey the meaning of the words used in the original language?

The exam is graded on a pass/fail basis. Multiple and/or significant errors in any combination of these categories result in a failing exam.

Effective May 2009; Last updated August 2025

Preparing for the language examination

Northeastern students have access to language tools, such as language dictionaries and language lessons, at <https://subjectguides.lib.neu.edu/worldlanguages>.

Graduate students also have an opportunity to enroll in NU undergraduate language courses in order to learn, refresh, or practice their language skills. Students are responsible for paying the tuition charges associated with these credits, and the undergraduate language course will not count toward the credits needed to complete the degree. For more information, visit <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/resources/resources-for-current-graduate-students/>.

Practice exams can be requested from the Graduate Program Coordinator up to one week in advanced of the exam.

PHD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

In accordance with University regulations (<http://catalog.northeastern.edu/graduate/social-sciences-humanities/general-regulations/>), all Ph.D. students must complete the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination no later than twelve months after completing coursework. (Incomplete grades do not stop the clock.) The Comprehensive Examination consists of three field and focus papers, each supervised by one member of the examination committee, and a two-hour oral examination covering the three papers and the student's possible dissertation/future research in which all three members of the committee participate. Although professors will approve the individual field and focus papers submitted for the exam, the exam is not passed *in any part* until the entire process has been completed and the committee, has discussed and evaluated all of the written and oral parts of the exam as a whole.

Committee

The student initiates the Comprehensive Examination process by selecting a committee chair and forming an examining committee. The examining committee will normally consist of three professors—the committee chair and two additional committee members—from the Department of English.

The committee chair works with the student and the other committee members to develop and coordinate the examination's three fields and reading lists for each. It is recommended that the committee members and the student meet together once at the beginning of the process in order to develop and agree on a schedule for the written examinations. For a recommended schedule, please refer to the Suggested Timeline for the PhD Comprehensive exam on page 25. After forming the committee and consulting with it, the student must submit to the GSC the Comprehensive Exam Plan Form no later than the **second Friday of April or November** during the semester when they have completed coursework.

A student may, with the consent of the Graduate Studies Committee, add a member to the examining committee from outside the department, either from Northeastern or from another institution. To do so, the student must present the GSC with a General Petition Form briefly stating the reason for adding an outside member to the committee and outlining the proposed committee member's credentials (typically demonstrated via a CV).

Examination Fields

Examination fields should be chosen in consultation with the committee and its chair, based on their relevance to the student's scholarly, pedagogical, and professional goals. Students are urged to consider fields either as opportunities to do background research that will lead them directly into a dissertation project, or as opportunities to learn an area in which the student wishes to teach or seek employment in the future. It is helpful to select fields that have some points of contact between them, be it in terms of area, period, methodology, or other criteria. Crafting a plan for the Comprehensive Exam is, then, a moment to consider what kind of expertise the student wishes to develop as a scholar, a teacher, and a professional, with an eye to their future self-presentation on the job market.

PHD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (continued)

Reading Lists

Each Field and Focus paper will be based on a reading list of important primary and secondary texts in the field. In consultation with the professor advising, each field and focus reading list should include approximately 40-50 entries in total, comprising primary and secondary works. Reading lists should be introduced by a rationale of approximately 100 words. The rationale will define the field and explain the criteria or lines of inquiry guiding the choice of texts to represent that field and their intended area of focus within the field. Sample reading lists are available from the Department Graduate Office, and many can be found online. The Reading List must be submitted, along with the final versions of the Field and Focus Papers, to the Comprehensive Examination committee prior to the Oral Exam. Students are expected to be prepared to discuss all of the texts on their Reading Lists at the Oral Exam, even those that are not discussed in the Field and Focus Paper itself.

Field and Focus Papers

The length of each Field and Focus paper is typically 20-30 pages. It is composed of two parts: the Field section and the Focus section. The Field section should provide an overview of the field studied, and the Focus section offers a detailed consideration of a specific question, topic, or critical issue within the field. Grounded in attention to a smaller set of texts within the field, the focus section might also offer a proposal for future research in the field. The committee member for each examination field will determine when the field and focus paper is satisfactory. Field and focus FAQs can be found on the Current Student Resources page (<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/english/resources/resources-for-current-grad-students/>).

Oral Examination

Once the student has satisfactorily completed all three field and focus papers, the student provides copies of the papers and the reading lists to the committee and schedules the two-hour oral examination and notifies the Graduate Program Coordinator of the exam date. The final comprehensive exam should include a one- to two-page cover letter explaining to the committee how the three fields relate to the student's research, teaching, and professional goals. The purpose of the oral examination is to demonstrate for the full examining committee that the candidate has command of the Comprehensive Examination fields and is ready to make the transition to the dissertation. The Comprehensive Exam is not passed in any part or stage until the oral exam is completed and the committee has evaluated both the papers individually and the exam overall. The student is responsible for bringing the CSSH Comprehensive Exam Results form, available on the Current Student Resources page, to the oral examination (<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/english/resources/resources-for-current-grad-students/>).

Evaluation

Students must receive approval from the individual papers' advisors for all three Field and Focus papers before taking the oral examination. The committee as a whole must agree on the student's evaluation after the oral exam and the comprehensive exam committee chair must submit the student's CSSH Comprehensive Exam Results form to the Graduate Office on the day of a successful oral examination. Evaluation for both the individual papers and the oral exam will be "Pass with Distinction," "Pass," or "Fail." The designation of "Pass with Distinction" on at least three of the four components of the comprehensive examination shall qualify for an overall examination evaluation of "Pass with Distinction." A failure of the examination must be made up by a second examination with the same committee. A student who fails a second oral examination may not continue in the program.

PHD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (continued)

Time Limit

A student who does not successfully complete three field and focus papers and pass the oral examination within twelve months following the completion of course work will be classified as not in good standing in the program, and in some rare cases may not continue in the program.

Doctoral Candidacy – Fall 2018 or earlier

Students who matriculated in Fall 2018 or earlier achieve candidacy upon successful completion of their oral examination, at which point the Graduate Program Coordinator will submit a CSSH Candidacy Form on behalf of the student to the college Graduate Office. Once this form is processed, the candidacy line will be visible on the student's transcript. They will register for Dissertation Term 1 for the following term.

Students who matriculated in Fall 2019 or later should consult the following section on “dissertation procedures” for updated details about candidacy achievement.

Effective September 2013; Last updated August 2024

DOCTORAL PROGRAM DISSERTATION PROCEDURES

Dissertation Committee

As soon as possible after completing the Comprehensive Examination, the student should form a Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee will normally consist of three faculty members from the Department of English. They need not be the same three faculty members who administered the student's Comprehensive Examination. One member of the Dissertation Committee, with their consent, will be designated by the student as Director of the dissertation. A junior faculty member may co-direct with a senior faculty member. Upon establishing the committee, the student should notify the Graduate Program Coordinator and specify who is the Director. Once the prospectus is approved by the Dissertation Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee, the student may change the membership of the Dissertation Committee only with the consent of the Graduate Studies Committee.

A student may, with the consent of the Graduate Studies Committee, add a fourth member to the Dissertation Committee from outside the Department – either from Northeastern or from another institution. The student must present the Graduate Studies Committee with a General Petition Form briefly outlining the rationale for adding a fourth member to the Dissertation Committee and summarizing the proposed member's credentials in the area of the dissertation. The student must also include a CV for a proposed member outside of Northeastern.

Soon after the formation of the dissertation committee, it is advised that the whole committee and the student meet in order to discuss the timing of the research and writing for the dissertation, as well as when and how individual chapters will be read and evaluated by the committee members.

Prospectus

Within six months after completing the comprehensive examination, a student must submit to the Graduate Studies Committee a dissertation prospectus approved by the Dissertation Committee along with a signed Prospectus Approval Form, found on the Current Student Resources page (<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/english/resources/resources-for-current-grad-students/>). The prospectus should be 3-4,000 words in length, excluding bibliography. It should explain the topic of the dissertation, its proposed argument, and its relationship to its scholarly context. It should clearly describe the proposed chapters and their content, followed by a bibliography of both primary and secondary works to be consulted. The prospectus is not a first chapter or an in-depth essay, but a succinct overview of the work the student plans to do and its rationale.

Doctoral Candidacy – Fall 2019 and later

Students who matriculated in Fall 2019 or later achieve candidacy upon submission of their completed prospectus and signed Prospectus Approval Form to the Graduate Studies Committee, at which point the Graduate Program Coordinator will submit a CSSH Candidacy Form on behalf of the student to the college Graduate Office. Once this form is processed, the candidacy line will be visible on the student's transcript. They will register for Dissertation Term 1 for the following term.

Students who matriculated in Fall 2018 or earlier should consult the previous section of the Guide on "comprehensive examination" for information about candidacy achievement.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM DISSERTATION PROCEDURES (continued)

Prospectus or Work-in-Progress Presentation

Within one year of submitting the approved prospectus, a student must give a one-hour public presentation of their prospectus or a selection of work-in-progress from the dissertation to the English Department. Presentations typically consist of an introduction by the Dissertation Director, a 20-30 minute presentation, and 15-20 minutes of Q&A between the committee and the student. If time remains following committee questions, the Director will invite the audience to ask any questions. Students are responsible for identifying a time for the presentation that allows for the entire Dissertation Committee to attend. Presentations must be publicized to the department at least two weeks in advance to qualify as a public event.

Writing the Dissertation

While writing the dissertation, students should be in frequent contact with all members of the Dissertation Committee, especially the Director. All members of the committee must have the timely opportunity to review drafts of chapters, so the student may have the benefit of effective commentary and suggestions on drafts.

Preparing to Submit the Dissertation for Defense

The completed dissertation must be submitted for defense following the College of Social Sciences and Humanities dissertation format requirements and procedures for depositing the dissertation, as detailed in the *Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guidelines* issued by the Graduate Office (<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/resources/theses-and-dissertations/>). **The student must submit a final version of the dissertation, ready for the defense, to the entire committee no later than 3-4 weeks before the date of the defense.**

Dissertation Defense

When the Dissertation Committee agrees that the dissertation is ready to defend, the student and the Director will establish a date and time for the two-hour defense. The student will assume responsibility for notifying the Graduate Program Coordinator and the College of Social Sciences and Humanities Graduate Office of when and where the defense will take place and for participating in the required formatting meeting with the Graduate Office, as detailed in the *Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guidelines* (<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/resources/theses-and-dissertations/>). CSSH must be notified, at a minimum, just over two weeks before the scheduled defense. The student is responsible for bringing the Northeastern University Graduate Approval Record, located at the *Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guidelines* webpage, to the defense.

The dissertation defense, which presents the major aims and findings of the dissertation, consists of a 45 minute public lecture, followed by a 30 minute question period with the Committee. If time allows, the candidate can also field questions from the audience. After the Q&A period the Committee will engage in confidential deliberation about the defense and the dissertation.

If the Dissertation Committee is satisfied by the defense, the student may proceed to deposit the dissertation. If the Committee is not fully satisfied by the defense, members may request that the student make revisions before depositing the dissertation or that a second defense be scheduled. Note commencement deadlines when scheduling the defense (see <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/resources/resources-for-current-graduate-students/#commencement>).
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GRADUATE STUDENT GROUPS

The English Graduate Student Association (EGSA), a student group officially acknowledged by the University, is intended for all graduate students in the English Department at Northeastern. Its mission is to ensure and improve the quality of the graduate programs, promote the professional development of graduate students, develop policies and procedures that benefit graduate students, encourage faculty-student communication, and foster collegiality amongst graduate students. For more information or to get involved, contact northeasternEGSA@gmail.com.

The English Department is also home to several other student groups aligned around common interests and areas of study. More information can be found at <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/english/program/phd-english-program/english-graduate-student-organizations/>.

The Graduate Student Government (GSG) works through the Graduate Senate which is the official representative body for all graduate students at Northeastern. The Senate acts as the liaison between the graduate student body and the university administration. It serves as a forum for communication of graduate students' concerns and needs. It works to enhance the graduate student life on campus. For more information or to get involved, contact GSG@northeastern.edu.

The Graduate Student Government provides funding for graduate student group events. Visit the GSG website (<https://www.northeastern.edu/gsg/>) for more information.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students seeking support and information regarding international policies, employment regulations, and visa requirements should consult the website for the Office of Global Services at <https://international.northeastern.edu/ogs/>. Current students can contact OGS for any questions through the [Service Portal](#) by logging in with their Northeastern credentials.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Northeastern Ph.D. Network is an organization designed to build community among Ph.D. students. The Network provides students with support and resources university wide to enhance their educational experience and career preparation. Opportunities available to Ph.D. students through the Ph.D. Network include travel funding, access to a database of pre- and post-doctoral fellowships including opportunities for experience in authentic settings, and a calendar of events. For more information, visit <https://phd.northeastern.edu/network/overview/>.

Students can access important Graduate Program, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, and University web pages, as well as graduate program forms and FAQs, via the Current Student Resources web page at <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/english/resources/resources-for-current-grad-students/>.

STIPENDED GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS (SGA)

PhD students in the English department are assigned stipended graduate assistantships, or SGAs, during their academic study. SGA assignments are made at the department level in conjunction with the College of Social Sciences and Humanities and are assigned each semester for the following semester. Students may choose to apply to a variety of available opportunities for their SGA assignment, but these are not guaranteed.

Tutoring/Teaching

1. Tutoring in the Writing Center

Many incoming students to the PhD program work as tutors in the [Writing Center](#), which is run by the English Department's Writing Program and serves the entire University. In one-on-one writing consultations, tutors support writers at any stage of the writing process and in any genre, from class research papers to résumés to creative writing. These 45-minute sessions are encouraging and supportive, with the aim of making the Center a welcoming, inclusive place. There are also opportunities for SGAs to help out with projects and initiatives, from hosting graduate writing groups to developing workshops for university organizations (opportunities vary by semester). The tutoring schedule offers relative flexibility (including the option for online evening and weekend shifts), and students can often choose a mix of in-person and remote tutoring hours.

2. Teaching Assistant (TA)

Sometimes students can assist faculty members teaching undergraduate courses with high enrollments in the English department and across related departments in CSSH, such as the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program. The work often involves assisting with the grading of exams and papers. Occasionally, instructors may invite TAs to cover or teach part of or an entire class session. TA positions are very limited and not always available, determined by class size and instructor need.

3. Teaching in the Writing Program

Typically, after the first year of program study (or during the second semester of the first year if students have substantive prior teaching experiences) students can teach in the [Writing Program](#). Students teaching a class in the Writing Program have the opportunity to teach either an on ground First-Year Writing or Advanced Writing in the Disciplines class depending on the program's need. After approval, students will undergo training and mentoring before designing and facilitating their own class; all Writing Program instructors are expected to attend program-wide meetings. Students provide their course subject preferences as well as their preferred time blocks typically the semester prior to teaching (for example, preferences are requested in late September to teach in the spring semester, or they may be requested in June for the upcoming fall semester).

Research Assistants

1. Graduate Research Assistant

Sometimes individual faculty members require assistance with major research, publication, or public humanities projects.

2. SIGNs Graduate Research Assistants

English students have the opportunity to assist with the [SIGNs literary journal](#). All SIGNs graduate students pitch in with a variety of tasks related to the journal. Some

specific opportunities include having a particular focus on acquisitions (working with the team to anonymize manuscripts for peer review, finding likely reviewers, copy editing, etc); focusing on social media, public facing work, etc.; or providing assistance to Professors Carla Kaplan or Suzanna Walters. Students work on preparation work for board meetings and monitoring feminist public spaces for relevant FPIP content. Assignments to specific SIGNs responsibilities are generally based on skill set and on longevity with the journal.

3. Written Communication Research Assistant

English students have the opportunity to assist with the Written Communication journal. The assistant performs a variety of complex editorial, research and support duties to coordinate publication of scholarly works in a competitive, professional journal for quantitative and qualitative research. Some specific tasks include attending weekly editorial team meetings, assisting with editing and revision, recordkeeping, social media and print marketing, and training in the ScholarOne system to create instruction guides. The assistant works both independently and concurrently with Professor Mya Poe.

Digital Humanities Project Research Assistant/Project Manager positions

Many faculty members in the English department and across CSSH work on a variety of digital humanities (DH) projects. There are also opportunities for students to work with NULab for Digital Humanities and Computational Social Science or the Digital Humanities Quarterly journal. Students interested in learning, exploring, practicing, or enhancing their digital humanities skills can choose to apply to work in a variety of research or project management positions with faculty in the department, CSSH, and across the University.

1. **NULab Digital Integrative Teaching Initiative (DITI positions):** Students with prior DH skills work with faculty across CSSH to implement digital tools and activities in their courses.
2. **Digital Humanities Quarterly:** No DH experience necessary. Students can work in a variety of capacities for one of the key DH journals in the field.
3. **Individual faculty-led projects:** [Transgender Digital Archive](#), Mapping Black London, the Homosaurus, the WWP, ECDA, EBBDA, the Cherokee Syllabary project, Reckonings, and more.

Administrative/Managerial positions

1. Assistant Director of the Writing Program

The Writing Program chooses an Assistant Director every academic year to assist with administrative tasks related to the operations of the Writing Program. The Assistant Director assists with a variety of tasks including attending all Writing Program Committee meetings and working with them on tasks under their purview, collecting and analyzing data, coordinating peer instructor visits, development and maintenance of the *Writing Program Instructor Sourcebook* and the Writing Program website, overseeing the undergraduate production of *NU Writing*, and helping the First-Year Writing Director and Director of Advanced Writing in the Disciplines with special projects, as needed. In addition, the Assistant Director holds office hours every week for walk-in consultation with writing instructors about teaching-related topics and reports concerns to the Writing Program Director and the Writing Program Committee.

Students must have taught in the NU Writing Program and have familiarity with writing studies scholarship to apply for this position.

2. Assistant Director of the Writing Center

The Writing Center chooses an Assistant Director every academic year to assist the Writing Center Director with overseeing the day-to-day operation of the Center. Regular responsibilities of the position include coordinating the staffing schedule, serving as a main point of contact for employees, facilitating ongoing staff training and meetings, assisting with the hiring process, keeping handbooks updated, and communicating with other campus organizations about Writing Center services. The Assistant Director works closely with the Director to make the position relevant to their own research and professional interests.

The PhD Network offers a wealth of information regarding other aspects of the assistantship, including information about funding, information for pay distribution, and other resources about SGAs on their website: <https://phd.northeastern.edu/network/resources/>

Last updated August 2025

DOCTORAL STUDENT RESEARCH AND TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES

NOTE: Funding levels and amounts granted to PhD students will be subject to changes in university policy. At this time, the GSC cannot guarantee granting of funds in specific monetary amounts. The language below has been amended to reflect this. We will provide written update to PhD students on funding status once we know more this fall.

Ph.D. Student Research

Ph.D. students in the Department of English are eligible for partial reimbursement from the department for expenses incurred for research for their comprehensive exams or dissertations (e.g. buying research materials currently unavailable from the library or interlibrary loans, using funds towards transcribing research interviews, etc.). The purpose of the funds request must be to pursue research germane to the student's dissertation work, comprehensive exams, or professionalization.

Eligibility begins with the second year of doctoral study and applies to students who are enrolled full-time, making satisfactory progress, and within their funding window. Preference will be given to students at work on their comprehensive exams or dissertations.

Ph.D. Student Travel

Ph.D. students in the Department of English are also eligible for partial reimbursement for expenses incurred in traveling to conferences, institutes, or other academic activities, such as archival research, for each year of residence at Northeastern, starting in the second year of doctoral study. The purpose of travel must be to present or pursue research germane to the student's dissertation work or professionalization. Chairing a session does not make one eligible unless the student proposed that session and is playing a significant participatory role in it.

Eligibility begins with the second year of doctoral study and continues for as long as a student is enrolled full-time and making satisfactory progress. Students entering the program with advanced standing may petition the GSC for eligibility in their first year. Preference will be given to students at work on their dissertations.

Funding for research and travel reimbursement is not automatic or guaranteed. The departmental reimbursement benefit may change in response to larger institutional changes or unforeseen budget constraints. Students seeking one or both forms of funding (travel or research based) should be advised that requests cannot exceed \$500 total from the department. Only travel funding has the potential to be matched by the PhD Network.

DOCTORAL STUDENT TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

NOTE: Funding levels and amounts granted to PhD students will be subject to changes in university policy. At this time, the GSC cannot guarantee granting of funds in specific monetary amounts. The language below has been amended to reflect this. We will provide written update to PhD students on funding status once we know more this fall.

Consultation with Advisor

Upon receiving notification of acceptance from the conference convener(s) or an institute, the student consults with their faculty advisor to discuss the professional significance of the conference or institute; the fit between the conference or institute and the student's intellectual program, especially the dissertation; and the publication of versions of the student's prior conference presentations, if any. If considering another academic activity, a consultation is also required.

Reimbursement Application Process

1. The student first submits a Doctoral Student Travel Reimbursement Request Form for the Graduate Studies Committee's consideration, available on the Current Student Resources web page (<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/english/resources/resources-for-current-grad-students/>). Applications must include a copy of communication of paper acceptance from the conference convener(s) or the institute, or information about the archive or other academic activity. **Apply before traveling.**
2. If the request is approved, the GSC will supply a letter for the student's PhD Network application for one-time (per fiscal year), matching funds. Information, deadlines, and forms for Ph.D. Network funding can be found at <https://phd.northeastern.edu/network/opportunities/>.

Review Process

The GSC normally considers funding requests at their monthly meetings. Resources are limited, and not every application will necessarily be approved for funding. The GSC would hope to respond within a business day after their meeting.

Applying for Reimbursement

Students receive their travel grants in the form of reimbursement, up to the amount of the approved funding, not for the full cost of the trip. To recover their expenses, a student must retain and present expense receipts, including airline ticket stubs or e-ticket confirmations. Expense Voucher Reimbursement forms are available on the university Finance website (https://finance.northeastern.edu/forms/#how-do-i-plan-travel-or-prepare-an-expense-report_expense-voucher-reimbursement-form) and must be filled in fully and accurately. Completed forms should be submitted to the Department Office. Please note that reimbursement checks may take up to 4-6 weeks for Student Accounts to process.

Effective July 1, 2018; Updated August 2025

DOCTORAL STUDENT RESEARCH REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

NOTE: Funding levels and amounts granted to PhD students will be subject to changes in university policy. At this time, the GSC cannot guarantee granting of funds in specific monetary amounts. The language below has been amended to reflect this. We will provide written update to PhD students on funding status once we know more this fall.

Consultation with Advisor

Students seeking research funding should first consult with their faculty advisor to discuss the significance of the research need to their dissertation, comprehensive exam, and/or professionalization. Advisors may also be able to point students to alternative sources of research funding from the University or elsewhere. **The advisor's signature is required on the request form.**

Reimbursement Application Process

1. The student first submits a Doctoral Student Research Reimbursement Request Form to the Graduate Studies Committee. If applicable, applications must include any relevant documentation, such as a copy of communication of additional funding from any other sources. Anticipated expenses should be outlined as specifically as possible; for example, requests for the reimbursement of books or other texts should be accompanied by link(s) clearly indicating the cost of those materials. **NOTE:** Funding for books will not be approved if they are available via inter-library loan. Please double check before requesting reimbursement.
2. If the request is approved, the Graduate Program Coordinator will issue an approval letter for the student to submit with their other departmental reimbursement materials (details below).

Review Process

The GSC normally considers funding requests at their monthly meetings. During the summer term when no meetings take place, requests will be shared with the committee as they are received. Resources are limited, and not every application will necessarily be approved for funding. The GSC would hope to respond within a week after the meeting.

Applying for Reimbursement

Students receive their research grants in the form of reimbursement, up to the amount of the approved funding. To recover their expenses, a student must retain and present itemized expense receipts alongside a completed and accurate [Expense Voucher Reimbursement Form](#). Materials should be submitted to Graduate Program Coordinator. Please note that reimbursement checks may take up to 4-6 weeks for processing via Student Accounts.

Effective July 2020, Updated August 2025

DOCTORAL PROGRAM SUGGESTED TIMELINES

For students entering with the B.A. in English or equivalent, *effective Fall 2021*

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Courses	Year 1 12 SH Proseminar Core Curriculum	12 SH Core Curriculum Annual Review
	Year 2 12 SH Electives	12 SH Electives Annual Review Comprehensive Exam Plan Form due second Friday in April All language requirements completed
Examinations	Year 3 0 SH ENGL 8960: Exam Prep Field and Focus paper #1 Begin Field and Focus paper #2	0 SH ENGL 8960: Exam Prep Annual Review Field and Focus papers #2-3 Oral Examination by May 1
	Year 4 0 SH ENGL 9986: Research Candidacy is achieved upon prospectus approval (within 6 months of Oral Examination)	0 SH After candidacy: ENGL 9990: Dissertation Term 1 Annual Review
Dissertation	Year 5 0 SH ENGL 9991: Dissertation Term 2 Prospectus Presentation or Work-in-Progress Presentation within one year of prospectus approval	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Annual Review
	Year 6 0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Defend in late March/April Commence in May

DOCTORAL PROGRAM SUGGESTED TIMELINES (continued)

For *continuing* students who entered with the B.A. in English or equivalent
in Fall 2019 or Fall 2020

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Courses	Year 1 12 SH Proseminar Core Curriculum	12 SH ENGL 7392 Core Curriculum Annual Review
	Year 2 12 SH Core Curriculum Electives	12 SH Electives Annual Review Comprehensive Exam Plan Form due April 10 All language requirements completed
Examinations	Year 3 0 SH ENGL 8960: Exam Prep Field and Focus paper #1 Begin Field and Focus paper #2	0 SH ENGL 8960: Exam Prep Annual Review Field and Focus papers #2-3 Oral Examination by May 1
	Year 4 0 SH ENGL 9986: Research Candidacy is achieved upon prospectus approval (within 6 months of Oral Examination)	0 SH After candidacy: ENGL 9990: Dissertation Term 1 Annual Review
Dissertation	Year 5 0 SH ENGL 9991: Dissertation Term 2 Prospectus Presentation or Work-in- Progress Presentation within one year of prospectus approval	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Annual Review
	Year 6 0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Defend in late March/April Commence in May

DOCTORAL PROGRAM SUGGESTED TIMELINES (continued)

For continuing students who entered with the B.A. in English or equivalent
before Fall 2019

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Courses	Year 1 12 SH Proseminar Core Curriculum	12 SH ENGL 7392 Core Curriculum Annual Review
	Year 2 12 SH Core Curriculum Electives	12 SH Electives Annual Review Comprehensive Exam Plan Form due April 10 All language requirements completed
Exams/Candidacy	Year 3 0 SH ENGL 8960: Exam Prep Field and Focus paper #1 Begin Field and Focus paper #2	0 SH ENGL 9986: Research Annual Review Field and Focus papers #2-3 Candidacy is achieved upon successful Oral Examination completion
	Year 4 0 SH After candidacy: ENGL 9990: Dissertation Term 1 Prospectus meeting Prospectus approval within 6 months of Comprehensive Exam	0 SH ENGL 9991: Dissertation Term 2 Annual Review
Dissertation	Year 5 0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Prospectus Presentation or Work- in-Progress Presentation within one year of prospectus approval	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Annual Review
	Year 6 0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Defend in April Commence in May

DOCTORAL PROGRAM SUGGESTED TIMELINES (continued)

For students entering with the M.A. in English or equivalent, *effective Fall 2021*

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Courses	Year 1 12 SH Proseminar Electives	12 SH Electives Annual Review Comprehensive Exam Plan Form due second Friday in April All language requirements completed
Examinations	Year 2 0 SH ENGL 8960: Exam Prep Field and Focus paper #1 Begin Field and Focus paper #2	0 SH ENGL 8960: Exam Prep Annual Review Field and Focus papers #2-3 Oral Examination by May 1
Dissertation	Year 3 0 SH ENGL 9986: Research Candidacy is achieved upon prospectus approval (within 6 months of Oral Examination)	0 SH After candidacy: ENGL 9990: Dissertation Term 1 Annual Review
Dissertation	Year 4 0 SH ENGL 9991: Dissertation Term 2 Prospectus Presentation or Work-in-Progress Presentation within one year of prospectus approval	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Annual Review
Dissertation	Year 5 0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Defend in late March/April Commence in May

DOCTORAL PROGRAM SUGGESTED TIMELINES (continued)

For *continuing* students who entered with the M.A. in English or equivalent
in Fall 2019 or Fall 2020

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Courses	Year 1 12 SH Proseminar Electives	12 SH ENGL 7392 Electives Annual Review Comprehensive Exam Plan Form due April 10 All language requirements completed
	Year 2 0 SH ENGL 8960: Exam Prep Field and Focus paper #1 Begin Field and Focus paper #2	0 SH ENGL 8960: Exam Prep Annual Review Field and Focus papers #2-3 Oral Examination by May 1
Examinations	Year 3 0 SH ENGL 9986: Research Candidacy is achieved upon prospectus approval (within 6 months of Oral Examination)	0 SH After candidacy: ENGL 9990: Dissertation Term 1 Annual Review
	Year 4 0 SH ENGL 9991: Dissertation Term 2 Prospectus Presentation or Work-in-Progress Presentation within one year of prospectus approval	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Annual Review
Dissertation	Year 5 0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Defend in late March/April Commence in May

DOCTORAL PROGRAM SUGGESTED TIMELINES (continued)

For *continuing* students who entered with the M.A. in English or equivalent before Fall 2019

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Courses	Year 1 12 SH Proseminar Electives	12 SH ENGL 7392 Electives Annual Review Comprehensive Exam Plan Form due April 10 All language requirements completed
	Year 2 0 SH ENGL 8960: Exam Prep Field and Focus paper #1 Begin Field and Focus paper #2	0 SH ENGL 9986: Research Annual Review Field and Focus papers #2-3 Candidacy is achieved upon successful Oral Examination completion
Examinations	Year 3 0 SH After candidacy: ENGL 9990: Dissertation Term 1 Prospectus meeting Prospectus approval within 6 months of Comprehensive Exam	0 SH ENGL 9991: Dissertation Term 2 Annual Review
	Year 4 0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Prospectus Presentation or Work-in-Progress Presentation within one year of prospectus approval	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Annual Review
Dissertation	Year 5 0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation	0 SH ENGL 9996: Dissertation Continuation Defend in April Commence in May

SUGGESTED COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION TIMELINE*

Fall Semester	Spring Semester		
<p style="text-align: center;">Year 1 (If entering with MA)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Year 2 (If entering with BA)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Comprehensive Examination Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend the GSC Field and Focus training in January • During Annual Review meeting, discuss fields and possible committee members. • Identify a committee chair and discuss a set of Comprehensive Examination fields. • Meet with faculty members to ascertain their willingness to serve as members of the exam committee. It may be necessary to meet with several faculty to establish an appropriate committee. • Complete the Comprehensive Exam Plan Form by the second Friday in April 		
<p style="text-align: center;">Year 2 (If entering with MA)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Year 3 (If entering with BA)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Field Paper #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop primary and secondary reading list on the basis of readings and in consultation with committee member. • After receiving the supervising committee member's approval, circulate the list to the full committee. • Submit Field Paper #1 for final evaluation by the supervising committee member. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Field Paper #2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop primary and secondary reading list on the basis of readings and in consultation with committee member. • After receiving the supervising committee member's approval, circulate the list to the full committee. • Submit Field Paper #2 for final evaluation by the supervising committee member. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Field Paper #3 + Oral Exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop primary and secondary reading list on the basis of readings and in consultation with committee member. • After receiving the supervising committee member's approval, circulate the list to the full committee. • Submit Field Paper #3 for final evaluation by the supervising committee member. <p style="text-align: center;">Oral examination no later than May 1</p>

*Students may petition the Graduate Studies Committee if extraordinary examination issues arise.

GRADUATE FACULTY SPECIALTIES

Nicole N. Aljoe

Professor

Eighteenth- & nineteenth-century Black Atlantic literature; the slave narrative; postcolonial studies (Black British, African, Caribbean, Latin American, South Asian); eighteenth-century British novel; gender/sexuality and writing; archival studies; visual culture

Sari Altschuler

Associate Professor

Health humanities; disability studies; eighteenth- & nineteenth-century American literature

Erika Boeckeler

Associate Professor

Shakespeare; Renaissance lyric poetry, history of the book and early modern print cultures (Western & Eastern Europe), early modern visual art, archival studies, material studies, feminist & race-conscious bibliography

Hillary Chute

Professor

Comics and graphic novels; contemporary fiction; visual studies; American literature; gender and sexuality studies; literature and the arts; critical theory; media studies

Ellen Cushman

Professor

Writing and rhetoric; literacy studies in tribal and urban communities; decolonial rhetorics; Cherokee language and writing; digital composing and archiving; writing pedagogies; qualitative research methodologies and research in the teaching of English

Elizabeth Maddock Dillon

Professor

Seventeenth- through nineteenth-century American literature; transatlantic seventeenth-nineteenth century literature; origins of the novel; public sphere and early print culture; eighteenth-century drama – British and American; aesthetics; feminist theory; critical theory; early Caribbean literature; early African American literature; literature and performance; archival studies; literature and political theory

Julia Flanders

Professor of the Practice

Digital humanities (markup systems, data modeling, digital editions, digital literary studies), digital archives, digital project design and development

GRADUATE FACULTY SPECIALTIES (continued)

Chris Gallagher

Professor

Writing and rhetoric; writing pedagogy and assessment; writing program administration; educational change and reform

Alison Glassie

Assistant Professor

Environmental humanities, ocean and coastal studies, hemispheric American literatures, cultural studies, comparative literature, modern and contemporary literature, global anglophone literature, multi-ethnic American literatures, Caribbean literatures, postcolonial literatures

Nicole Guidotti-Hernandez

Professor

Nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century American literature; Latinx Historical, Literary, and Cultural Studies; Ethnic and Feminist Studies Theory and Methods; Hemispheric American Studies

Laura Green

Professor

Victorian literature; twentieth-century Anglophone literature; history and theory of the novel; feminist and queer theory

Carla Kaplan

Professor

Twentieth-century American literature; modernism; African American literature and history; feminist theory; biography and cultural history; literary journalism and creative nonfiction

Kathleen Kelly

Professor

Medieval studies; film; contemporary British novel; non-human and post-human studies; animal studies; ecocriticism; feminist and gender theories; genre theories; narrative theories (with a particular interest in magic realism and other “non-traditional” forms); queer theories; British literature from the medieval period through the present; speculative fiction

Eunsong Kim

Associate Professor

Twentieth- and twenty-first-century US literature, modern and postmodernism, visual studies; poetics, critical gender studies, Asian American literature, us multi-ethnic literature, new media studies

GRADUATE FACULTY SPECIALTIES (continued)

Lori Hope Lefkowitz

Professor

Narrative; Jewish literature and Judaism and gender studies; Hebrew bible; contemporary theory; Victorian literature

Neal Lerner

Professor

Writing and rhetoric; writing across the curriculum; writing centers; literacy; writing studies research methods; professional and technical communication; archival studies

Patrick Mullen

Associate Professor

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century Irish and English culture and politics; modernity and globalization; Marxism; critical theory; history of sexuality

Mya Poe

Professor

Writing and rhetoric; justice-oriented writing assessment; research ethics; mixed methods research; writing in the disciplines with particular interest in data representation; rhetorical genre studies; inclusive and antiracist journal editing

K.J. Rawson

Professor

Writing and rhetoric; LGBTQ+ studies; digital humanities; rhetorical historiography; archives and linked data; queer, trans, and feminist rhetorics

Qianqian Zhang-Wu

Assistant Professor

Bi/multilingualism; multilingual writing; translanguaging pedagogy; linguistically responsive instruction; applied linguistics

Updated August 2025