

# Diversity and Inclusion Report

## English

### Undergraduate Program

Our goal is to develop an anti-racist, discipline-specific (literary studies, writing and rhetoric, creative writing, and linguistics) set of best practices and policies for ENGL classes, as well as to ensure that our curriculum reflects these practice and policies.

Our focus is twofold: first, anti-racist pedagogy is concerned with how we conduct classroom discussions, class management, assessment, and other aspects of our teaching. It is a culturally responsive pedagogy. Second, we are also concerned with content; that is, the curriculum. Generally speaking, we currently offer courses that explicitly address, in the title and/or the catalog description, racial and ethnic identity. We also offer an array of courses in which many of us explicitly address race (including Whiteness) or ethnic identity through language, visual culture/rhetoric, and/or literary representations, though the analysis of race may not be the driving goal of the course.

Examining representations of race in the Department of English will occur along two axes: first, the historical, in that literary texts, visual images, and other cultural artifacts of the past have shaped many of our attitudes today, and the more we understand both history and literary history, the more informed we are with respect to understanding and interpreting the second axis—the texts, images, and other artifacts that make up the contemporary cultural landscape.

### Next Steps

1. Coordinate with the Writing Program and bring in speakers, using funds attached to the Barrs Lecture Series and the Hanson Prize
2. Create a Canvas site to pull together resources for teaching
3. Conduct workshops in early spring 2021
  - a. Two workshops run by outside facilitators, with a focus on developing a working document of antiracist practices specific to our disciplines (literary studies, writing and rhetoric, creative writing, and linguistics), as well as reviewing our mission statement and goals with an eye to revision.
  - b. Workshops comprised of small groups in which we would share work in our disciplines that address race.
4. Review and revise our mission statement, goals, degree requirements, and our four foci.
5. Review and revise our curriculum
  - a. Rethink and reposition “ENGL 1700: Global Literature to 1500” (required of all majors) and “ENGL 1701: Global Literature 1500 to the present” as a site for diverse voices
  - b. Identify a cluster of courses that could constitute a minor, and/or contribute to a CSSH curriculum on race

- c. Develop a gateway course on literature, racism, and social justice for the minor
- 6. Develop an assessment plan to ensure that we are meeting our revised goals
- 7. Examine our extra-curricular initiatives (talks, speakers, the newsletter, etc.)
- 8. Revise our website that makes our goals with respect to representations of race, structural racism, anti-racism, and racial justice movements visible

## Writing Program

The overarching goal of Writing Program anti-racist work is to have a targeted approach to program improvement that addresses professional development, curriculum, and pedagogy. As a result, the writing program has undertaken a three-prong approach to its anti-racist work.

1. **Sustained professional development:** Based on faculty feedback last spring, the WP has moved from short Teaching Networks (TN) events to semester-long professional development opportunities. The first of these is Melissa Pearson's Racial Literacies "Master Class," which began in July 2020, provided 15-20 WP faculty and graduate students the opportunity to meet and discuss anti-racist work over six workshops/discussions. Resources from the series are available to all WP faculty. In spring, we will run another semester-long PD opportunity.
2. **Guest speakers:** This year we identified a list of speakers whose work speaks to antiracist action. The first of these talks was from Jonathan Osborne, Assistant Professor of English at Louisiana State University (Northeastern PhD, 2019) on "Black Conservative Rhetoric, Argument, and the 2020 Election." This talk was open to the public and almost 40 people attended. Spring 2021 speakers include Antonio Byrd, Assistant Professor of English at University of Missouri - Kansas City (specializes in Black literacy for liberation carry forward into new technologies and media features); Romeo García, Assistant Professor of Writing and Rhetoric Studies at University of Utah (specializes in local histories of settler colonialism and settler archives, community praxis, and decolonial critique); and Vershawn Young, Professor, Departments of Communication Arts and English Language and Literature, University of Waterloo, Canada (specializes in code-meshing).
3. **Evidence-based action:** The WP distributed a survey in the fall that asked WP faculty to define what anti-racist work meant to them, what work they had done, how the learning goals might be revised to reflect this work, and what else they would like the program to do. We, also, collected community agreements and information about classroom assessment. This information, used with permission of respondents, was then used as the basis for the creation of the following working groups:
  - a. **Anti-racist Learning Goals working group:** Develop new learning goal(s) or revise existing learning goals to include anti-racist action
  - b. **Perspectives and Practices:** Identify appropriate workshops and other activities that the WP should undertake to support and sustain anti-racist efforts—for example, workshops and reading groups related to anti-racist work in a number of different ways (for example, camera usage).
  - c. **Writing Program Assessment Committee:** Assemble a bibliography and other resources for anti-racist pedagogy. WPAC is also conducting research on teaching online.
  - d. These groups work in coordination, as well, with the FYW working group, which also has a subgroup on antiracist pedagogy in FYW and NUFlex models.

All faculty, graduate students, visitors, and even undergraduates are invited to participate in the working groups.

## Graduate Program

The English Department Graduate Studies Committee has hired two graduate students—one from our MA program and one from our PhD—to assist with an in-depth curricular review. We began by reviewing all graduate syllabi from the past three years and tagging them for content, assignments, and pedagogical frameworks that support the work of antiracism in the department. From the data gathered we prepared executive summaries of trends across courses and the broader curriculum and identified areas of greatest need for revision. The GSC flagged several program learning outcomes that could be revised to help address areas where our curriculum is not serving our goals for justice and anti-racism. In the spring the committee will be working on revising these learning outcomes and, following departmental approval, hosting a workshop (or series) to help our instructors revise their syllabi in light of the outcome revisions