

Race and Social Justice Initiatives

English

Undergraduate Program

The Undergraduate Program's learning outcomes were revised to reflect the department's commitment to exploring race and social justice. Specific student learning goals include:

- investigate the rhetorics and literacies of local and global communities by using a variety of methods, including community-based, historical, and justice-based approaches
- examine the power of language and rhetoric to effect action, shape knowledge and identity, and constitute communities
- explore English and the way that language shapes our communities and ourselves

Graduate Program

The Graduate Program's learning outcomes were revised to reflect the department's commitment to exploring race and social justice. Specific student learning goals include:

- Design and conduct sustained, sophisticated, independent research to make a critical contribution to subfields within English studies by engaging in analytical thinking, investigating relationships between language and power, or critiquing inherited social structures and hierarchies within and beyond the field(s)

Writing Program

The Writing Program's student learning goals (which drive curriculum and pedagogy) were augmented to include two specific goals related to DEI and social justice:

- Students explore diverse experiences, perspectives, and ideas—such as intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, language, and ability—in campus, societal, disciplinary, professional, or historical contexts
- Students engage in activities that help them understand and critique systemic inequity to foster a commitment to justice at Northeastern and globally

Additional activities related to race and social justice include an on-going reading group on anti-racist pedagogy (led by Professor Melissa Pearson previously and now by Professor Justin Mellette), as well as specific research on language, literature, and social justice from Professors Mya Poe, Qianqian Zhang-Wu, K.J. Rawson, Elizabeth Dillon, Nicole Aljoe, Kathleen Kelly, Erika Boeckeler, among others. Also, several faculty (Gonso, Lerner, Garrett, Avery-Miller, Stockman, Thornbrough) are closely involved in community-engaged research and teaching, partnering with community organizations such as Boston Public Schools, 826 Boston, the Boston Debate League, and HERE Social Justice Coalition Hyde Park.

Finally, all Department members (students, faculty, staff) were invited to take part in a facilitated workshop on "Understanding Social Identities" in spring 2022, offered by the YW-Boston. We plan on following up that workshop with more sustained activity, as well as continuing review of curriculum.