

**English Department
Graduate Student Handbook
2024–2025**

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I. SOURCES OF USEFUL INFORMATION

Sites to know about

- **<https://english.olemiss.edu> – “Graduate Students” menu**

If you have a question, this and the graduate school webpage are the first two places you should look for an answer. From here you can find links to descriptions of:

 - degree requirements
 - candidacy procedures (including suggested orals reading lists)
 - information on fellowships and financial aid
 - forms you will need to file at various stages of your degree
 - pdf of course descriptions for upcoming graduate courses
 - a list of current graduate students and news about recent graduate award winners

- **<https://gradschool.olemiss.edu/home/> – “Current Students” menu**

From the tab for current students at the graduate school webpage, you will find information regarding:

 - the academic calendar
 - graduate course catalog (for courses outside of the English department)
 - student health insurance
 - financial aid, fellowships, and travel grants
 - forms and manuals library
 - information on preparing your thesis/dissertation for filing (formatting, forms)
 - information for filing for graduation

- **Social media, for keeping abreast of events and conversations:**
 - UM English Graduate Students Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/168157079908901/>
 - The University of Mississippi/English Department Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/umissenglish>
 - UM English on Instagram (@UUMissenglish) and X (@UMissenglish)
 - UM MFA program on X and Instagram: @mississippiMFA

- **Keeping up with the larger profession:**
 - Many professional organizations have listservs and newsletters that you can sign up for to receive updates on conferences, publications, fellowships, and other funding opportunities. Once you have a sense of your area(s) of interest, it can be a good idea to put yourself on the relevant listservs.
 - *The Chronicle of Higher Education*: The English Department has a subscription to the *Chronicle*. To look at the department’s copy of this weekly publication, go to the main office. You can also access it electronically via the library website: go to <https://libraries.olemiss.edu/> and click “Journals A–Z” to search for it. The *Chronicle* has useful articles about surviving graduate school, advertisements and listings for fellowships, conferences, and jobs, and reviews of recently published books in various academic fields.

Useful Contacts

Department Chair

Caroline Wigginton (she/her)
cwiggint@olemiss.edu
Office: Main Department Office, Bondurant C128

Director of Graduate Studies

Jason Solinger (he/him)
solinger@go.olemiss.edu
Office: Bondurant C121
Cell: (662) 832-6772

MFA Director

Melissa Ginsburg (she/her)
mrbondur@olemiss.edu
Office: Bondurant C218

During your first semester as a graduate student in the department you will be directly advised by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The DGS can offer advice on choosing courses, managing your schedule, and planning for your degree. The DGS is also the administrator you should contact about issues of graduate credit.

Department Staff Assistant

Myra Gilmore (she/her)
msgilmo1@olemiss.edu
Office phone: 662-915-7439
Office: Bondurant Hall C128

The department staff assistant, **Myra Gilmore**, performs a number of important jobs for us including:

- Filing travel authorizations prior to conference travel and travel reimbursements upon return;
- Handling graduate school forms that require signatures from the Chair;
- Registration for thesis/dissertation hours or courses that are repeated (the online registration system will not allow students to register themselves in a repeated course);
- Helping to arrange for classroom equipment and issuing keys for equipment;
- Reserving the Hannah-Ford Room (Bondurant C208) for defending your thesis/dissertation or for taking your oral comprehensive exam (please be sure to schedule this in advance since the room is popular);
- Reserving rooms for special events;
- Scheduling appointments with the department chair;
- Handling departmental listservs;
- Communicating about TA assignments/sections;
- Department website and social media.

We are lucky to have Myra in the office. Please be patient and professional, especially during the busy days at the beginning of the semester. Please contact her via email if you have a request. Please do not ask to use her computer, printer, or copier. Grad students have computers available in our offices and in the library; there's a copy machine in Leavell.

Operations Coordinator

April Wootten (she/her)
awootten@olemiss.edu
Office Phone: 662-915-7492
Office: Bondurant C129

Our financial officer, **April Wootten**, is the person to contact when you have questions about financial issues. April has a number of diverse responsibilities including:

- Managing the department budget;
- Processing paperwork for grad student stipends and fellowships
- Processing awards and scholarships;
- Filing reimbursements for department events;
- Filing reimbursements for any personal expenses pertaining to teaching/job requirements;
- Providing classroom changes if your assigned classroom is too small;
- Event planning and class scheduling each semester/intersession.

April prefers to be contacted by email (aWootten@olemiss.edu), so please schedule an appointment with her in advance if you need individual help.

Leavell Hall Administrator

Barbara Thweatt (she/her)
bthweatt@olemiss.edu
Office phone: 662-915-3446
Office location: Leavell Hall 101

Barbara oversees things in Leavell Hall, where you will find your mailboxes, shared offices, and a photocopier for teaching-related use.

Chair of the Department of Writing and Rhetoric

Stephen Monroe (he/him)
smonroe@olemiss.edu
Office Phone: 662-915-1815
Office: Lamar Hall, 3rd Floor, Suite B

Administrative Coordinator: Department of Writing and Rhetoric

Glenn Schove (she/her)
gschove@olemiss.edu
Office Phone: 662-915-3434 (alternate number: 662-915-2121)
Office: Lamar Hall Suite B15

The administrative coordinator for the Department of Writing and Rhetoric (DWR), **Glenn Schove**, also performs a number of important jobs for us, including:

- Assigning offices
- Maintaining the fall and spring teaching schedules for TAs, graduate instructors, and adjuncts

- Providing copy codes for graduate instructors (if you are a TA, your professor should provide this)
- Arranging student evaluations for all GIs
- Gathering syllabi for WRIT 100, 101, 102 and LIBA 102
- Maintaining office hour listings and contact information for all TAs and GIs

UM Writing Centers

Writing Center Phone: 662-915-2121 (to schedule appointments and student visits)

Office Phone: 662-915-7686

Office: Lamar Hall, 3rd Floor, Suite C

As a graduate student in the English department, you may want to: recommend the writing centers to your own students; explore opportunities for employment in our centers as a graduate consultant or graduate student administrator; and/or take advantage of our specialized services for graduate student writers (see Section IX: University Resources).

Other information about contact and communication

Contacting and Meeting with Professors

All of our department professors make a genuine effort to be available to graduate students. Please understand, however, that they are also busy with teaching, committee work, and writing deadlines. All professors hold office hours during the week, so please make an effort to attend those office hours if you want to speak to them in person (all professors' office locations and hours are posted in a list outside the department's main office). It's a good idea to email beforehand in case the professor is planning to meet with undergraduates during that time.

If you can't meet during the professor's office hours, email the professor to set up an appointment. It's a good idea to suggest two or three different times that you would be free to meet. In order to maximize your meeting, come prepared with an idea of what you want to discuss. You might also notify the professor about the topic/s you'd like to address so she/he can think about that information in advance.

Intra- and Extra-Departmental Communication

Most department communication takes place through email, so you should check your UM account frequently. If you prefer to use a personal account you can arrange with university Information Technology (located in Weir Hall) to have your school email forwarded to your personal account. Emails for the entire department (students, faculty, and staff) will be sent through the Grapevine listserv (grapevine@listserv.olemiss.edu); emails to graduate students only will be sent through the Engrad listserv (engrad@listserv.olemiss.edu). Please be careful not to "Reply All."

Some department communications also come through the student mailboxes in the Leavell mailroom, so be sure to check it regularly. Faculty mailboxes are located in the faculty mailroom (Bondurant C135).

If you have to send a letter on official department business (e.g. to invite a speaker to campus, to contact a professor at another university in a formal way, to apply for jobs) you can ask for

department letterhead in the English Department office. The department also has a fax machine for your use which is located in the main department office. The fax number for the department is 662-915-5787.

II. DEGREE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

Please note: the most authoritative and up to date information regarding the (occasionally amended) policies and procedures of our programs is kept online at english.olemiss.edu, under “Graduate Students”.

The MA in English degree program consists of:

Degree Requirements:

- 24 hours of graduate coursework (excluding thesis hours) beyond the undergraduate degree, maintaining a “B” average, plus at least 6 hours thesis credit
- Completed thesis and successful oral defense of the thesis

Coursework Requirements:

- ENGL 600 (Introduction to Graduate Study)
- ENGL 617 (Teaching College English)
- 6 hours of coursework in literature before 1800
- 6 hours of literature after 1800
- 6 or more hours of elective coursework
 - Up to 6 hours of elective coursework may be in relevant academic disciplines outside the English Department; of those 6 hours, 3 may be taken as directed reading or independent study with approval of the Graduate Studies Committee
- At least 6 hours of thesis credit

The MFA in Creative Writing degree program consists of:

Degree Requirements:

- 36 hours of graduate coursework (excluding thesis hours) beyond the undergraduate degree, maintaining a “B” average, plus at least 6 hours thesis credit
- Successful completion of written exam
- Completed thesis and successful oral defense of the thesis

- ENGL 600 (Introduction to Graduate Study)
- ENGL 617 (Teaching College English)
- 12 hours in creative writing workshops
- 9 hours in literature seminars (700-level only):
 - 3 hours of pre-1800 courses
 - 3 hours of post-1800 courses
 - 3 hours of additional 700-level literature seminar
- 3 hours of ENGL 679 or ENG 683 (Form, Craft, & Influence)
- 6 hours of electives (including workshops, FCI, literature, classes in related disciplines and/or directed readings; only 3 of the 6 hours of electives may be taken as directed readings)
- At least 6 hours of thesis credit

The MA/PhD degree in English program (for students entering without an MA) consists of:

Degree Requirements

- 42 hours of graduate coursework (including ENGL 600 and ENGL 617, excluding dissertation hours) beyond the bachelor's degree, maintaining a "B" average, plus at least 18 hours dissertation credit
- Successful completion of qualifying procedures
- Submission of approved dissertation prospectus
- Completed dissertation and successful oral defense of the dissertation

Coursework Requirements:

- 3 hours of ENGL 600 (Introduction to Graduate Study)
- 3 hours of ENGL 617 (Teaching College English)
- 6 hours of coursework in literature before 1800
- 6 hours of coursework in literature after 1800
- 24 or more additional hours of seminars
 - Up to 6 hours of elective coursework may be in relevant academic disciplines outside the English Department; of those 6 hours, 3 may be taken as directed reading or independent study with approval of the Graduate Studies Committee
- At least 18 hours dissertation credit

The PhD in English degree program (for students entering with an MA) consists of:

Degree Requirements:

- 24 hours of graduate coursework (including ENGL 600 and ENGL 617, excluding dissertation hours) beyond the master's degree, maintaining a "B" average, plus at least 18 hours dissertation credit
- Successful completion of qualifying procedures
- Submission of approved dissertation prospectus
- Completed dissertation and successful oral defense of the dissertation

Coursework Requirements:

- 3 hours of ENGL 600 (Introduction to Graduate Study)
- 3 hours of ENGL 617 (Teaching College English)
- 6 hours of coursework in literature before 1800
- 6 hours of coursework in literature after 1800
- 6 or more additional hours coursework
 - Up to 6 hours of elective coursework may be in relevant academic disciplines outside the English Department; of those 6 hours, 3 may be taken as directed reading or independent study with approval of the Graduate Studies Committee
- At least 18 hours dissertation credit

The PhD with Creative Writing Emphasis degree program consists of:

Degree Requirements:

- 33 hours of graduate coursework beyond the MFA (additional courses may be required by the admission Committee on an individual basis), plus at least 21 hours dissertation credit
- Successful completion of qualifying procedures
- Completed dissertation and successful oral defense of the dissertation

Coursework Requirements:

- 3 hours of ENGL 600 (Introduction to Graduate Study)
- 3 hours of ENGL 617 (Teaching College English)
- 6 hours of coursework in literature before 1800
- 6 hours of coursework in literature after 1800
- 6 hours of creative writing workshop
- 9 hours of electives
 - may include up to 6 hours of Form, Craft, & Influence
 - may include up to 6 hours of graduate coursework in relevant academic disciplines outside the English Department; of those 6 hours, 3 may be taken as directed reading or independent study with approval of the Graduate Studies Committee

III. RETENTION POLICIES

It is our aim to support and nurture every graduate student to the successful completion of their degree. There are, however, some basic expectations set by the Graduate School, and failure to meet these may result in an invitation to withdraw, dismissal from the program, or termination of a Graduate Assistantship.

The full policies regarding dismissal, as well as a description of the procedure for appealing such decisions, are available through Graduate School's Academic Catalog, available on the UM Graduate School website. Below is an overview of some main points:

Dismissals for Failure to Maintain Good Academic Standing:

GPA: A graduate student must maintain a 3.0 GPA (B average) in each semester on all course work that is presented towards completion of a degree. A student whose GPA is less than 3.0 for any regular semester will be placed on academic probation, and a dean's registration hold will be applied to the student's record. Such a student will not be allowed to register for courses unless the academic department makes an affirmative recommendation to the Graduate Dean. Without a written, favorable recommendation from the chair or graduate program coordinator, this student will be converted to inactive status and must re-apply and be re-admitted to the graduate program in order to continue in it.

In addition, a student may be dismissed if s/he fails to meet specific requirements specified by the department. Ordinarily these requirements (e.g. passing a specific course or exam) should be made known to the student before enrollment; otherwise an appropriate faculty group may be formed to set these additional requirements based on a student's performance.

Timely Progress: A student may be dismissed if s/he fails to successfully complete the specified qualifying procedures or fails to progress towards a completed thesis/dissertation in a timely manner. In these cases, the advisor, graduate program coordinator, or chair must provide reasonable warning to the student, in writing, about academic performance deficiencies. Typically, these warnings would occur as part of a periodic review process. An appropriate group, such as the student's advisory committee or graduate studies committee, may recommend dismissal.

The Graduate School has also established its own time limitations for MA and PhD programs. Students who do not complete degree requirements within the established time limits will be changed to non-degree seeking II status.

Professional, Ethical, and Behavioral Expectations: Graduate students are expected to behave in a collegial manner and to adhere to the professional and ethical standards of the discipline. If in the judgment of the appropriate faculty group a student fails to meet these behavioral expectations, or otherwise fails to act in ways that are consistent with the norms and standards of the profession or discipline, an appropriate faculty group may recommend dismissal.

Conditions for Dismissal from a Graduate Assistantship

The appointment of a Graduate Assistant may be terminated by the University, upon the recommendation of the department head, for the following reasons:

1. Incompetent job performance or neglect of duty;
2. Misconduct that is job-related;
3. Moral turpitude;
4. Physical or mental ailment or condition which significantly impairs or limits job performance and cannot be easily accommodated;
5. Financial exigency or discontinuance of the work for which the appointment is made;
6. Mutual agreement;
7. Failure to maintain a GPA of 3.0 and/or failure to maintain the minimum enrollment obligation.

IV. THE DEGREE PATH

All of our graduate degrees are designed to move you from the relatively structured learning environment of the graduate seminar towards progressively more independent work. Below are descriptions of the distinct stages of our degrees, including coursework years, qualifying procedures, and thesis/dissertation completion. Please see Suggested Timelines (at the end of this section of the handbook) for a general picture of your overall progress through your particular degree.

The Coursework Years

Typically, students take two full academic years to complete coursework, and they generally complete more coursework hours than the minimum required for their degrees.

Coursework Hours

Full-time enrollment is defined as 9 credit hours in each of the fall and spring semesters. 12 hours is the maximum hours allowed without incurring additional tuition costs. Each seminar is 3 credit hours, hence full-time status can be achieved by enrolling in 3 seminars.

Alternatively, you may elect to take 2 seminars (i.e. 6 hours) plus thesis hours (3 hours). Thesis hours are designed to allow you to work on your own research/writing (e.g. students who are ABD enroll in 9 hours of thesis/dissertation hours each semester). Students who elect to intersperse thesis hours with coursework typically do so in order to set aside time for a specific goal—e.g. to begin preparations for candidacy procedures in the spring of your second year. Because the understanding is that you are using thesis hours to advance your work, there are no required assignments associated with thesis hours.

- To register for thesis hours, go to myOleMiss.edu and register for them as you would for any other graduate course. For MA students, sign up for ENG 697 (MA Thesis); for MFA students, sign up for ENG 698 (MFA Thesis), and for PhD students, sign up for ENG 797 (Dissertation)

You are not required to register for summer hours unless you are scheduled to defend your dissertation in the summer. However there are a number of reasons why you might need or want to register for summer hours. The most common reason that students enroll in summer hours is because they are free (unless you fail to register by the deadline) and enrolling in summer hours allows you to have uninterrupted access to the health center and gym during the summer (otherwise both may require a copay). Additionally, some outside student loans require you to remain full time enrolled during the summer (it is up to you to know the requirements of any outside loans or fellowships), or if you have been less than full time enrolled during the school year it may be necessary to take summer hours to ensure your continued full time enrollment status with the Graduate School.

Required Courses

All graduate students are required to take English 600 (Introduction to Graduate Study) in the fall of their first year, and English 617 (Teaching College English) in the spring. Exceptions may be

made if a student has previously taken a course in writing pedagogy, in which case the student may apply to the Director of Graduate Studies for an equivalence credit for 617.

Course Registration Information and Ordering Books

Near the end of each semester, the department will release a copy of the graduate course descriptions for the upcoming semester. You can pick up the course list at the main department office; it is also posted as a pdf online (go to <https://english.olemiss.edu/starting-fall-2016-graduate-courses/> and look for the pdf link). Each course description will include the course's focus and meeting times. Some professors will also include information about the assignment structure and specific texts you will cover in that class.

A course's required texts will be indicated in the course information in my.olemiss.edu and/or in the course syllabus. Many professors will send out information before the semester begins about which texts (in which editions) will be covered. You may buy the books through the university bookstore (Barnes and Noble), through Square Books in downtown Oxford, or via an online vendor like Amazon. However, when ordering online and especially when ordering used editions, be very careful to ensure that you are buying the same edition of the book that your professor has required. In some cases, the specific edition may not matter, but in many cases different editions of the same title will be substantially different, and you must have the correct edition for class. If you have questions about course texts and editions, you should contact the professor directly.

Directed Reading

In exceptional cases, students may be approved to do a directed reading in lieu of a scheduled seminar. Students may count up to three hours of directed reading towards their required coursework.

Applications for a directed reading course must be submitted to the Graduate Committee before the end of the semester previous, using the form listed on the department website (under Graduate Students>Information for Graduate Students> Timeline and Narrative Guide to Forms for Current Students). The application requires you to provide a detailed description of the proposed course (including a reading list and a plan for assessment—usually a seminar paper) as well as a detailed account of why the directed reading is necessary to your work and impossible to pursue under the auspices of the regular courses offered. The professor with whom you plan to work must sign this application.

A student's reasons for needing to pursue a directed reading in lieu of regular coursework must be compelling. Directed readings are not allowed on topics where similar courses are offered, and are consequently only rarely approved. You should have a specific reason for pursuing a directed study, one that cannot be addressed through normally scheduled coursework.

Forming a Thesis/Dissertation Committee

The process to establish a committee is student-initiated and done *online*, via MyOleMiss (under the "Student" tab, there's a box labelled "Processes involving me", under which you'll find the "Graduate Advisory Committee" link to create or edit your committee). You should be able to go in, name your committee members (talk to them first, of course), and then have the committee

sent for official department/GS approval. It's an entirely online process. Please be aware, though, that the committee can't be officially approved until you have the *entire* committee established. This means, esp., that PhDs need to have named their “external” (i.e. non-departmental) committee member. For MAs and MFAs it means naming all three of your people. Until you've entered the complete set, nothing gets sent anywhere to anyone for approval.

The thesis/dissertation committee consists of a chair (with whom you will work most directly) plus additional faculty members. The number and composition of the committee varies by degree path. The following breakdowns assume that the committee chair is among the numbered members:

- PhDs in English: four members (three UM English research faculty plus a fourth committee member who is UM faculty not affiliated with the English department).
- PhD with Creative Writing Emphasis: five members (two creative writing faculty, two research faculty, and a fifth committee member who is UM faculty not affiliated with the English department).
- MA: three research faculty.
- MFA: three members (two creative writing faculty and one research faculty).

Students typically form their thesis/dissertation committee no later than the end of their second spring semester (earlier if you are doing the PhD with Creative Writing Emphasis). But you should really begin to think about your committee composition during your first semester of coursework: as you get oriented to the department, try to identify the faculty whose work aligns with your interests (e.g. your genre and/or writing style, or your historical period and/or critical concerns) so that you can seek out courses with them. While you are free to approach any faculty member to be a part of your committee (regardless of whether you have taken a class with them) it is generally easiest for you both to decide whether yours will be a productive working relationship if you have worked together in the past. Timely formation of your committee is an important part of a successful degree. If you have difficulty deciding who to include on your committee, the director of graduate studies can help you to think through your best options.

When you are thinking about forming your committee, it may be useful to talk to other graduate students who have worked with the professors you are considering. Ask about that professor's expectations, working style, organization, and expertise. You will need to determine if your working style and expectations for the degree will match your committee's and particularly your chair's. A good working relationship with your chair will entail not only sharing similar aesthetics or research interests but also similar working styles. You want to choose committee members who feel that they can work well together to help you complete your thesis or dissertation.

When you have decided who you might like to ask to serve on your committee, you should set up appointments to meet with each of those faculty members. Do not put off these meetings simply because you find them intimidating! While the ask may be formal, your professors will do their best to put you at ease. You should come prepared to discuss your initial ideas for your thesis/dissertation, and to explain your reasons for wanting that particular faculty member to serve on your committee. Typically, the faculty member will let you know at the meeting or shortly after if they feel they will be able to join your committee.

As a rule, your professors are glad to work with graduate students as this offers them the opportunity to be involved with the cutting-edge research and creative work that our graduate

students produce. But do bear in mind that professors are also working under a number of time constraints (related to their own publishing deadlines, teaching, service commitments, and graduate advising), and they do not receive extra compensation for serving on students' committees. Occasionally a professor may decline to serve on a student's committee—usually because they do not feel they have the time or the right expertise to be useful to that student. Please be respectful of the professor's decision, and do not overthink their reasons for declining your invitation—all faculty have your best interests at heart, even when that means suggesting that a different faculty member may be better suited to serve on your committee.

Finally, remember that your committee need not be your only faculty contacts as you move through your degree. Our faculty has a wide range of expertise and experience, and even non-committee members may be useful in offering advice about teaching, writing, research, and publication. Please take advantage of the many incredible talents of our faculty members to help you develop personally and professionally.

When you have your full committee in place, you should submit your committee information to the graduate school for official approval (visit <https://gradschool.olemiss.edu/appointing-student-advisory-committees-student-version/> for instructions). For MAs and MFAs this step will likely be completed by the end of your second year, but for PhDs this step may not be completed until you have identified your extra-departmental reader (which typically happens in preparation for the prospectus defense).

Beyond Coursework: Candidacy Procedures and the Thesis/Dissertation

For a more detailed description of candidacy and thesis/dissertation procedures, go to english.olemiss.edu (choose your degree program under the “Graduate Students” dropdown menu, then click on “degree requirements”). Here you will find the full account of the two different MA thesis options, the MFA process, the steps of the PhD qualifying procedures, and PhD dissertation expectations.

For a more detailed descriptions of the forms that must be filed at various stages of your degree, see “Suggested Timelines” below. Copies of these forms may be found at english.olemiss.edu under “Graduate Students”>“Information for Current Students.”

MAs and MFAs: you should have your committee formed by the end of your fourth semester (second spring) of coursework. The following year (ideally starting in summer) you will enroll full time in thesis hours (ENG 697 for MAs/ENG 698 for MFAs) and complete the research and writing of your thesis. MAs in English should decide at the outset, in consultation with their chair, whether to pursue the traditional thesis (single 50-100 page research project) or the scholarly portfolio option (2-3 shorter essays plus introductory essay totaling 50-100 pages). You should remain in close contact with your chair throughout this year, submitting drafts for feedback and discussing your progress towards completion. It is also a good idea to remain in intermittent contact with your larger committee. In the spring of your third year, you will set a thesis defense date and submit your completed thesis to your committee at least two weeks prior to the thesis defense date (if not earlier).

PhDs in English: you should have your committee formed by the end of your fourth semester (second spring) of coursework. The following year (ideally starting in summer) you will enroll full time in dissertation hours (ENG 797) and prepare for your qualifying procedures, which should be completed within 18 months of the completion of your coursework. The first step of the qualifying procedure is the publishable article (20-25 pages) which should be completed no later than the end of the first semester following the completion of your coursework. The second step is the oral comprehensive exam (sample reading lists available the department website, under “Graduate Students>PhD>Degree Requirements”), which should be completed no later than the end of the second semester following the completion of your coursework. At this point you are technically ABD in the eyes of the Graduate School, although there remains one more step in the Qualifying Procedure: the prospectus, which consists of designing a special topics reading list and submitting and orally defending a prospectus (15-30 pages) outlining the proposed dissertation research. This step should be completed no later than the end of the third semester following the completion of coursework. Following successful defense of your prospectus, you will prepare the dissertation, a book-length work of original scholarly research. You should remain in close contact with your chair throughout this process, submitting drafts for feedback and discussing your progress towards completion. It is also a good idea to remain in regular contact with your larger committee. When your dissertation is complete and approved by your chair, you will schedule an oral defense with your dissertation committee, and submit your dissertation to them no less than two weeks prior to the defense date.

PhDs with Creative Writing Emphasis: you should have your committee formed by the end of your third semester and no later than your fourth semester (second spring) of coursework. The following year (ideally starting in summer) you will enroll full time in dissertation hours (ENG 797) and prepare for your qualifying procedures. The first step of the procedure is an oral comprehensive exam on a list covering 30–40 works from a historically diverse range of texts in one of four possible topic areas: American literature, British literature, World literature, or a custom topic. Your chosen texts can be drawn from the longer existing lists on historical periods (Medieval, Early American, 19th Century British, etc.) on the department website under “Graduate Students>PhD>Degree Requirements”; your list can be more heavily weighted towards a particular period, but must draw at least 20% of its titles from both pre- and post-1800 literature. Your list must be approved by your committee before you proceed; students interested in pursuing a custom topic list must also first consult with their committee in order to ensure their project can only be properly served by such a custom topic list. At this point you are technically ABD in the eyes of the Graduate School, although there remains one more step in the Qualifying Procedure: the dissertation prospectus, which will consist of *either* a comprehensive book proposal or an annotated book list. Both the exam and the prospectus should be completed by the end of the first semester following the completion of coursework—usually December 1st of your third year of studies. Following completion of this step, you will prepare the dissertation, a book-length work in your chosen genre accompanied by a critical introduction. You should remain in close contact with your chair throughout this process, submitting drafts for feedback and discussing your progress towards completion. It is also a good idea to remain in regular contact with your larger committee. When your dissertation is complete and approved by your chair, you will schedule an oral defense with your dissertation committee, and submit your dissertation to them no less than two weeks prior to the defense date.

A Note on Thesis Hours and Dissertation Hours

There's effectively no difference between thesis and dissertation hours--it's just a nomenclature technicality related to which degree path you're on. MAs and MFAs do "thesis hours," and PhDs sign up for "dissertation hours".

Thesis/dissertation hours have the same function for everyone. Their primary function is to serve as credit hours during the semesters in which people are not in course work because they are writing their big projects. In your third year as an MA or MFA or as a post-comps PhD student you are basically just writing, but the machine that is the university still needs to think of you as "registered" for something. Thesis/diss hours are what we tell that machine you are registered for. It's totally normal for people in the writing phases of their degree to be registered entirely for thesis hours—anything else would actually be the exception. Nine hours remains the default full-time load.

It does sometimes happen that people take thesis/diss hours **before** they are in the writing phases of their degree—i.e., sometime in their first couple years. There are two main questions here: should you do this? and how do you do it?

- *How you do it:* until you have established your committee officially you can't register for thesis/diss hours on your own. You need to email your DGS/MFA Director and get their approval. Assuming they are fine with the plan, they will email Myra who will register you for the hours.
- *Should you do it:* this is slightly more complicated. The obvious benefit of doing thesis hours is that it buys you more time..... but time is not everything. It goes without saying that no one should be registering for thesis/diss hours if there is any question that you will be able to complete the credit hour requirement / distribution requirements for your degree path. But it's possible that you have looked at what you've taken, done the math, and realized, *hey, it looks like I could take some thesis hours this semester and be fine to meet all my degree requirements.* If you're in this boat, thesis hours may seem to make obvious sense. Courses are often a lot of work, you've got TA duties, who couldn't use a few more minutes....? Fair enough. Still, we recommend that you proceed toward thesis hours with a little caution. Remember that course requirements are there to make sure people complete a certain minimum number of hours, but don't represent some ideal of the perfect amount of graduate coursework for your needs. You should start from the question of what you want to get out of the program, what you want the program to do for your intellectual and creative development, and take as many courses as you feel are necessary to accomplish that (within reason...)

Suggested Timelines

MA in English

Degree Requirements:

- 24 hours of graduate coursework (excluding thesis hours) beyond the undergraduate degree, maintaining a “B” average, plus at least 6 hours thesis credit
- Thesis
- Oral defense of the thesis

Coursework Requirements:

- ENGL 600 (Introduction to Graduate Study)
- ENGL 617 (Teaching College English)
- 6 hours of coursework in English or American literature before 1800
- 6 hours of English or American literature after 1800
- Up to 6 hours of elective coursework (may be in related disciplines; 3 of those 6 hours may be as independent study/directed reading)
- At least 6 hours of thesis credit

MA TIMELINE

Year/Term	Coursework	Tasks
1/Fall	ENGL 600 6 hours seminars	
1/Spring	9 hours seminars	
1/Summer	3-6 summer thesis hours	
2/Fall	9 hours seminars OR Combination of seminar and thesis hrs.	Contact prospective committee chair and 2 other members. Submit grad advisory committee request form (instructions here)
2/Spring	6 hrs seminars plus 3 hrs ENG 617 OR Combination of seminar and thesis hrs.	
2/Summer	3-6 summer thesis hours	Begin researching and writing thesis
3/Fall	9 thesis hours	Continue researching and writing thesis
3/Spring	9 thesis hours	Complete Thesis; Schedule Thesis Defense (2 weeks ahead) Submit authorization for final exam GS7 Apply for graduation GS8 Complete Report of Final Examination (emailed by graduate school to thesis director about a week before defense) upon successful defense

		You and your committee members complete online Departmental Assessment Form (available here) Prepare Thesis MS; Thesis Manual available here
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MFA in Creative Writing

Degree Requirements:

- 36 hours of graduate coursework (excluding thesis hours) beyond the undergraduate degree, maintaining a “B” average, plus at least 6 hours thesis credit
- Written Exam
- Thesis
- Oral Thesis Defense

Coursework Requirements:

- ENGL 600 (Introduction to Graduate Study)
- ENGL 617 (Teaching College English)
- 12 hours in creative writing workshops
- 9 hours in literature seminars (700-level only):
 - 3 hours of pre-1800 courses
 - 3 hours of post-1800 courses
 - 3 hours of additional 700-level literature seminar
- 3 hours of ENGL 679 or ENG 683 (Form, Craft, & Influence)
- 6 hours of electives (including workshops, FCI, literature, classes in related disciplines and/or directed readings; only 3 of the 6 hours of electives may be taken as directed readings)
- At least 6 hours of thesis credit

MFA TIMELINE

Year/Term	Coursework	Tasks
1/Fall	ENGL 600 plus 3 hours lit seminar, 3 hours workshop	
1/Spring	9 hours (lit/workshop)	
1/Summer	3-6 summer thesis hours	
2/Fall	9 hours (lit/workshop)	Contact prospective committee chair and 2 other members. Submit grad advisory committee request form online (instructions here)
2/Spring	ENG 617 plus 6 hours (lit/workshop)	
2/Summer	3-6 summer thesis hours	Begin researching and writing thesis
3/Fall	9 hours (lit/workshop/thesis)	
3/Spring	9 hours (lit/workshop/thesis)	Complete Reading List; Submit authorization for final exam GS7 ; Complete Comprehensive Exam; Complete Thesis; Apply for graduation (form GS8); Schedule Thesis/Exam Defense (2 weeks ahead);

		Complete Report of Final Examination (emailed by graduate school to thesis director about a week before defense) upon successful defense; You and your committee members complete online Departmental Assessment Form (available here) Prepare Thesis MS; Thesis Manual available here
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Combined MA/PhD in English (students entering from the BA)

Degree Requirements

(For students holding a Bachelor's degree)

- 42 hours of graduate coursework (including ENGL 600 and ENGL 617, excluding dissertation hours) beyond the bachelor's degree, maintaining a "B" average, plus at least 18 hours dissertation credit
- Successful Completion and Defense of Qualifying Procedure
- Submission of Approved Dissertation Prospectus
- Completed Dissertation and Successful Dissertation Defense

Coursework Requirements:

- 3 hours of ENGL 600 (Introduction to Graduate Study)
- 3 hours of ENGL 617 (Teaching College English)
- 6 hours of coursework in English or American literature before 1800
- 6 hours of coursework in English or American literature after 1800
- 24 or more additional hours of seminars
 - Up to 6 hours of elective coursework may be in related disciplines; 3 of those 6 hours may be as independent study/directed reading)

COMBINED MA/PhD TIMELINE

Year/Term	Coursework	Tasks
1/Fall	ENGL 600 6 hours of seminars	
1/Spring	9 hours of seminars	
1/Summer	6 hours summer thesis	
2/Fall	9 hours of seminars	Contact prospective committee chair and members, including extradepartmental member. Submit grad advisory committee request form online (instructions here)
2/Spring	ENG 617 plus 6 hours of seminars	Meet with DGS to discuss degree progress at end of semester; schedule qualifying procedure process with committee, with deadlines for each stage.
2/Summer	6 hours summer thesis	
3/Fall	6 hours seminars 3 hours dissertation	Use dissertation hours to prepare for Qualifying Procedure Step 1
3/Spring	9 hours dissertation	Qualifying Procedure Step 1 (Publishable Article) submitted no more than 6 months after end of coursework; submit Oral Comprehensive Exam reading list for approval by all committee members
3/Summer	6 hours summer thesis	Prepare for Qualifying Procedure Step 2
4/Fall	9 hours dissertation	Qualifying Procedure, Step 2 (Oral Comprehensive Exam) to take place no more than 12 months after end of coursework; submit Form

		GS5 at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral comprehensive exam; ensure committee chair submits Form GS5.1 following successful exam
4/Spring	9 hours dissertation	Qualifying Procedure Step 3 (Defense of Dissertation Prospectus) to take place no more than 18 months after the end of coursework; dissertation supervisor sends a PDF of the successfully defended prospectus to gschoolforms@olemiss.edu .
4/Summer	6 hours summer thesis	Dissertation
5/Fall	9 hours dissertation	Dissertation
5/Spring	9 hours dissertation	Dissertation
5/Summer	6 hours summer thesis	Dissertation; prep job materials if going on market
6/Fall	9 hours dissertation	Academic job market (opens September 15)
6/Spring	9 hours dissertation	Apply for graduation (form GS8) before GS deadlines (check GS deadlines; can be rolled over to next semester); check your transcripts; submit authorization for final exam GS7 at least 2 weeks before scheduled Dissertation Defense; after the successful defense of your dissertation, ensure committee chair submits Report of Final Examination (emailed by graduate school to chair about a week before defense). In addition, after you have defended, you and your committee members will need to complete online the Departmental Assessment Form. Note: The dissertation prospectus oral defense and completion of the dissertation defense cannot occur during the same full term (fall, spring, full summer), and there must be a minimum of four calendar months between these events.
		Graduate (May or August); funding ends.
		File Thesis; Prepare MS; Dissertation Manual available here ETD Permissions form GS11 available here

PhD in English (students entering with an MA)

Degree Requirements:

(For students holding a Master's degree)

- 24 hours of graduate coursework (including ENGL 600 and ENGL 617, excluding dissertation hours) beyond the master's degree, maintaining a "B" average, plus at least 18 hours dissertation credit
- Successful Completion of Qualifying Procedure
- Completed Dissertation and Successful Dissertation Defense

Coursework Requirements:

- 3 hours of ENGL 600 (Introduction to Graduate Study)
- 3 hours of ENGL 617 (Teaching College English)
- 6 hours of coursework in English or American literature before 1800
- 6 hours of coursework in English or American literature after 1800
- 6 or more additional hours coursework
 - Up to 6 hours of elective coursework (may be in related disciplines; 3 of those 6 hours may be as independent study/directed reading)

PHD TIMELINE

Year/Term	Coursework	Tasks
1/Fall	ENGL 600 6 hours of seminars	
1/Spring	9 hours of seminars	
1/Summer	6 hours summer thesis	
2/Fall	9 hours of seminars OR combination of seminar and dissertation hours	Contact prospective committee chair and members, including extradepartmental member. Submit grad advisory committee request form online (instructions here)
2/Spring	ENG 617 plus 6 hours (combination of seminar and dissertation hours)	Schedule qualifying procedure process with committee, with deadlines for each stage.
2/Summer	6 hours summer thesis	Prepare for Qualifying Procedure Steps 1 and 2
3/Fall	9 hours dissertation	Qualifying Procedure Step 1 (Publishable Article) submitted no more than 6 months after end of coursework; submit Oral Comprehensive Exam reading list for approval by all committee members; ensure committee chair has submitted Form GS5
3/Spring	9 hours dissertation	Qualifying Procedure, Step 2 (Oral Comprehensive Exam) to take place no more than 12 months after end of coursework; submit Form GS5 at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral comprehensive exam; ensure committee chair submits Form GS5.1 following successful exam

3/Summer	6 hours summer thesis	Prepare for Qualifying Procedure Step 3
4/Fall	9 hours dissertation	Qualifying Procedure Step 3 (Defense of Dissertation Prospectus) to take place no more than 18 months after the end of coursework; dissertation supervisor sends a PDF of the successfully defended prospectus to gschoolforms@olemiss.edu .
4/Spring	9 hours dissertation	
4/Summer	6 hours summer thesis	
5/Fall	9 hours dissertation	Academic job market (opens September 15)
5/Spring	9 hours dissertation	Apply for graduation (form GS8) before GS deadlines (check GS deadlines; can be rolled over to next semester); check your transcripts; submit authorization for final exam GS7 at least 2 weeks before scheduled Dissertation Defense; after the successful defense of your dissertation, ensure committee chair submits Report of Final Examination (emailed by graduate school to chair about a week before defense). In addition, after you have defended, you and your committee members will need to complete online the Departmental Assessment Form. Note: The dissertation prospectus oral defense and completion of the dissertation defense cannot occur during the same full term (fall, spring, full summer), and there must be a minimum of four calendar months between these events.
		Graduate (May or August); funding ends
		File Thesis; Prepare MS; Dissertation Manual available here ETD Permissions form GS11 available here

PhD with Creative Writing Emphasis

Degree Requirements:

- 33 hours of graduate coursework beyond the MFA (additional courses may be required by the Admission Committee on an individual basis), plus at least 21 hours dissertation credit
- Successful completion of qualifying procedures (oral exam and prospectus defense)
- Completed dissertation and successful oral defense of the dissertation

Coursework Requirements:

- 3 hours of ENGL 600 (Introduction to Graduate Study)
- 3 hours of ENGL 617 (Teaching College English)
- 6 hours of coursework in literature before 1800
- 6 hours of coursework in literature after 1800
- 6 hours of creative writing workshop
- 9 hours of electives
 - may include up to 6 hours of Form, Craft, & Influence
 - may include up to 6 hours of graduate coursework in relevant academic disciplines outside the English Department, of which 3 may be directed reading

PHD WITH CREATIVE WRITING EMPHASIS TIMELINE

Year/Term	Coursework	Tasks
1/Fall	ENG 600 6 hours of lit seminars	
1/Spring	9 hours lit seminars/workshops (at least 3 hrs of each)	
1/Summer	6 hours summer diss	
2/Fall	9 hours lit seminars/workshops (at least 3 hrs of each)	Contact prospective committee chair and members, including extradepartmental member; submit grad advisory committee request form (instructions here)
2/Spring	ENG 617 plus 3 hours of seminar or workshop 3 dissertation hours	Use dissertation hours to schedule and prepare for oral examination and prospectus; submit oral examination reading list to committee for approval; ensure committee chair has submitted Form GS5
2/Summer	6 hours summer diss	Prepare for oral examination and prospectus
3/Fall	9 hours dissertation	Complete oral exam and prospectus by end of term; ensure committee chair has submitted Form GS5.1 (can submit after oral exam or wait until after prospectus); dissertation supervisor sends a PDF of the successfully defended prospectus to gschoolforms@olemiss.edu .
3/Spring	9 hours dissertation	Apply for graduation (form GS8) before GS deadlines (check GS deadlines; can be rolled over to next semester); check your transcripts; submit authorization for final exam GS7 at least 2 weeks before scheduled

		Dissertation Defense; after the successful defense of your dissertation, ensure committee chair submits Report of Final Examination (emailed by graduate school to chair about a week before defense). In addition, after you have defended, you and your committee members will need to complete online the Departmental Assessment Form. Note: The dissertation prospectus oral defense and completion of the dissertation defense cannot occur during the same full term (fall, spring, full summer), and there must be a minimum of four calendar months between these events.
3/Summer		File Thesis; Prepare MS; Dissertation Manual available here ; ETD Permissions form GS11 available here . Graduate (May or August); funding ends

V. ADVICE FOR FIRST- (AND FIFTH-) TIME TAs

In the Classroom

Every instructor develops their own teaching style and different classrooms will have different relational dynamics. Nevertheless, there are some basic expectations governing the teacher-student relationship. Above all, you should conduct yourself with professionalism at all times when dealing with your students, and this includes being consistent, responsible, honest, fair, open-minded, and patient with them. It is a good idea to be human (i.e. friendly and vulnerable) with them, but it is also your job to model for them the maturity, preparedness, and intellectual seriousness that we want to see from them.

Here are a few tips on comportment in the classroom:

- Always be consistent in your attendance, participation, grading, and other policies. Listen and be understanding, but be firm.
- Model the accountability you want to see from your students by being accountable yourself: arrive to class early, be organized, return assignments on time, etc.
- It's unproductive and unprofessional to become angry or defensive at your students. Keep your equilibrium even if a student doesn't. Do not criticize a student in front of the other students.
- If you're a TA, don't criticize the course professor to your students. If you have concerns about how the professor is teaching the material or running class, you should raise them with the professor, or if necessary with an intermediary like the grad studies director.
- Do not discuss your students' grades, work, etc. with anyone other than your supervising professor, especially not with other students.

Here are a few tips on leading a successful class:

- Always plan ahead to prepare for your classes. Try to build in flexibility to your plans so that you always have more to discuss if need be, but also—crucially—so that you can also do less if need be. It's usually best to let a discussion unfold at its own pace rather than to rush your students through an activity or over-ambitious lesson plan. So be sure to identify your priorities for each class, address them at the outset, and leave yourself time to explore unexpected questions and conversations if and when they come up.
- Your main role in discussion section is to facilitate *student* discussions. This means you should not lecture, and it also means that you should try not to let the class fall into a rote question/answer rhythm. Instead, your aim is to spark conversation, usually about particular passages in a text. Choose open-ended passages, come with an open mind about what they might mean (don't assume you have the only right reading of them and it's the students' job to say what you're thinking). Most importantly, try to draw students' thoughts out (one good trick is to never accept an answer they offer as the last word—always *listen carefully* to what your students say and then ask a follow-up question about what they've just said, even if just to ask them to expand or clarify).
- Try to ask questions that you think may have more than one right answer, or that you yourself don't know the answer to.
- Maintain control in the classroom, but be willing to allow the discussion to go “off-script” especially when students become engaged with a question.

- Recognize that the students in your classroom will have a diverse range of instructional needs and you should plan assignments and class sessions that work to provide that variety.
- Remember that your peers, professors, and the CWR are here to help you to develop your skills as a teacher. Don't be afraid to ask your peers and your professors for advice on how to handle particular situations or how to generate more vibrant discussions in the classroom.

Office Hours

Schedule regular weekly office hours for your students and make yourself available for scheduled appointments. Most graduate instructors and TAs use their Leavell offices for office hours, but this is not a requirement and you can hold office hours at any location easily accessible to students, such as the library or the Student Union. Since the office phone is communal, you might want to advise your students that email is the best way to reach you since it is not guaranteed that you will receive phone messages.

Communication with the Professor and Navigating the Chain of Command

As a TA, you will typically be the first person that a student should contact with questions or concerns about the course; you will also tend to be the first to notice if a student may need intervention. However, the ultimate responsibility for administering the course, and creating and adjudicating course policies, lies with the professor. If a student comes to you with a question or concern, or if you develop a concern about a student, it is up to you to use your judgement as to whether this is a problem you can address on your own without consulting the professor. Ideally, you will communicate important questions/concerns (or questions/concerns to which the answer is not clear from the syllabus), but you will handle all other questions/concerns on your own without involving the professor.

Making Copies

If you are a teaching assistant, you should ask your professor for his or her copy code on the first day of class. You can make copies for class at the Xerox machine in the department mailroom in Bondurant. Please remember that you have a limited number of copies available, so you should only copy important classroom materials for your students. Other items, such as handouts, articles or PowerPoint slides can be scanned or downloaded onto Blackboard for student access. If making personal copies, your University of Mississippi Student ID number will allow you to access the machine.

Dropping or Adding Students

The first weeks of large lectures are often chaotic, with many students lingering on waitlists and asking to be added to the course. It is not your responsibility to drop or add students; if the waitlist has been cleared, tell any student who approaches you to consult with the professor.

VI. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Fellowships

If you have been awarded a teaching fellowship, it will be processed through April Wootten in the main office. You will be paid twice monthly, usually on the 15th and the last weekday of the month (you can view your pay stub on MyOleMiss). A paycheck schedule is available online at Human Resources and you can arrange for direct deposit of funds. Your fellowship will run from mid-August to mid-May.

Summer teaching fellowships are often available but are not guaranteed. If you teach a summer course, then you are eligible to take one three-hour course for free that summer in addition to your stipend. Applications for summer teaching are available in the main office or on the department website, and you will be notified by email in the spring when the summer course schedule is released.

In addition, the Outreach/Continuing Studies office and the Graduate School have recently offered summer research fellowships. To be eligible, students must have attended full-time during the previous spring semester and must pursue summer research work. Dr. Whittington will notify you by email when these fellowship applications become available.

Student Loans

Information about student loans is available through the Financial Aid office in Martindale. You can check your student loan status and amount online through your MyOleMiss account. You must also accept all awards online. Student loans will be directly deposited into your Bursar account just before the beginning of the semester and then you will be sent a direct deposit of any remaining funds. You will be notified by email when your loan payments are disbursed.

Requesting Reimbursements

If you have been approved to spend personal money for a department event such as a social or if you are involved in a university organization connected to the English department, you should request reimbursement through April Wootten. Please save all of your receipts since reimbursements cannot be processed without them. You will be sent a check or a direct deposit for the reimbursement amount.

Requesting Conference Funding

Once you have applied and been accepted to present at a professional conference, you must contact April Wootten to request approval for conference funding. Conference funding is available on a first-come, first-served basis, while the money lasts. April Wootten can help you fill out the necessary paperwork to receive both department and Graduate School funds. You should bring a copy of your conference abstract, acceptance, and information about the conference location, dates, and travel. Please contact April **at least two weeks** in advance of the conference to request funding.

You are eligible for the following funds over the course of the school year:

- \$500 English Department funding
- \$300 Graduate School funding

The travel process is twofold. First, you must complete a travel authorization form that demonstrates proof (your abstract and acceptance notice) to the Graduate School that you will be presenting at the conference. You should purchase airline tickets and book hotel rooms online before requesting travel funds and should bring original copies of the receipts. Second, you have to complete a travel reimbursement voucher after the trip is completed. Please email April to schedule an appointment for completing this form. Bring all of the ORIGINAL receipts to this appointment. Since you have a maximum reimbursement amount (\$500.00 for the year), be careful about your spending if you plan to attend another conference during the year.

VII. DEVELOPING AS AN ACADEMIC

Building a CV

Your CV, or curriculum vitae, is the academic form of a resume. You can build your CV by emphasizing three elements of your degree (in descending magnitudes of importance for most academic jobs): research/publications, teaching, and professional service. Try to keep your CV updated regularly, since you will need it to apply for fellowships, conferences, committees, and other professional events.

Conferencing

Attending and presenting a paper at a conference can be a good way to get feedback on your work as well as to gain a sense of the work that is currently being done in your field. There is no need to start conferencing immediately, nor to attend several conferences a year, but once you have a clear sense of your potential project and have begun to develop work, it is a good idea to begin to apply to present at conferences relevant to your fields of interest.

There are several types of academic conferencing: there are local, regional, national, and international conferences, as well as conferences specifically for graduate students and others for all members of the profession. Some conferences are organized geographically (e.g. the Southeast Modern Languages Association conference [SAMLA] hosts panelists the region across a range of topics) while others are organized thematically (e.g. the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment [ASLE] hosts panelists from everywhere on topics specifically related to the literature and the environment). An academic conference paper is typically 15-20 minutes (7-9 pages) long, and papers are typically presented in a panel format consisting of three to four related papers. Between 6-12 months before a conference, potential conferencees will put together calls for papers (CFPs) outlining the theme of the panel they are proposing for the conference and soliciting abstracts (usually a 500 word description of the paper you plan to write). If you would like to present at a conference, you can find CFPs for a range of conferences listed at UPenn's website (<http://cfp.english.upenn.edu>) or you can go to the website for a particular organization/conference and look up the CFPs there. As you get further along in your research and meet more colleagues in your field, you can propose to submit a whole panel (or put one together by advertising via a CFP). You can look at sample panel proposals from your professors or other students in your department to help you design your own proposal.

There are also several local conferences that you can attend inexpensively to obtain conference experience for the first time. The annual Southern Writers/Southern Writing Graduate Conference at the University of Mississippi is a wonderful opportunity to present a paper or to chair a panel and to see how a conference works. The University's Gender Studies Conference also encourages presentations by both graduate and undergraduate students in any historical era. English graduate students can also attend the annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference for free and can submit to present at this conference. The Mississippi Philological Association holds a statewide conference each spring in Jackson for both creative and critical presentations.

Academic Publications

Publication is extremely important to success in the job market for PhD candidates and can also help MA and MFA students who wish to move on to PhD work or jobs in college instruction. As

you begin to produce more polished work (e.g. by conferencing and revising, or as you produce and revise work for your dissertation) it is a good idea to send work out to academic journals for publication. Talk with your professors about which journals might be a good fit: journals have different themes and standards, and since you can usually only submit a piece to one journal at a time (and since it can take 6 months to a year to hear back from that journal), you want to choose your targets very wisely.

You can find submission guidelines for most journals online. Be sure that you are very familiar with the journal before you send them an essay submission, since you do not want to send them something that will not meet their criteria (this wastes both your and their time). You can find a searchable database of journals on the Modern Language Association website; the university library also has hard copies of many journals that you may want to read before submitting. Include a clearly written cover letter with your essay along with any information that the journal requests.

In addition to academic essays, there are other types of publications that you may want to pursue, especially early in your career. Book reviews are a relatively easy way to begin publishing in journals, and many smaller journals need reviewers. Contact editors of journals directly to state your interest, your qualifications, and the types of books you would like to review. What is the best part of reviewing? The free books, of course! You can also write literature reviews essays which basically involve writing a more in-depth review of several recently published books on a related theme, offering a kind of overview of new work in a specific field. Some journals look for literature reviews when they are publishing special editions. Many smaller and author-based organizations (e.g. *The Thoreau Society*) publish newsletters and often need reviews, articles, or reports of events that you can volunteer to cover. Finally, once you begin to make connections with academics in your field, you could be asked to write encyclopedic entries for authors or literary topics with which you are familiar. At this point in your career, any publication is a welcome publication!

Professional Service

Your research/publications and teaching experience are the most important features of your application to most academic jobs (or of your application to PhD programs). But professional service can also be of some value, particularly if you might pursue non-academic jobs after graduation (as many PhDs, MAs, and MFAs do).

Professional service relevant to research jobs can refer to anything from editorial work with a journal (e.g. *The Global South* or *The Yalobusha Review*—both housed at UM), to helping out with the organization of conferences or colloquia, to serving in a graduate student position within a national academic organization (preferably one related to your field, such as the Shakespeare Organization of America if you are an Early Modernist). Professional service relevant to teaching jobs might include, for instance, working with the EGSB to develop training programs for comp instructors. Finally, professional service relevant to non-academic jobs might include becoming involved with the Graduate Student Council, the Associated Student Body, and/or other campus organizations where you can develop organizational and leadership skills, as well as knowledge about the administrative side of universities.

VIII. OTHER DEPARTMENTS YOU MIGHT FIND INTERESTING

Taking Courses in Other Departments

You are encouraged to take relevant courses in other departments and may count up to six hours of outside coursework toward your overall course requirements. If the outside department only offers a particular course on the undergraduate level you might consider asking the professor to permit you to complete a directed reading or to audit the course.

The History Department

The History Department offers a number of graduate courses on historical periods throughout the different eras of literature. Although these courses typically do not focus on literature, they can prove very helpful with planning for comprehensives or for your thesis/dissertation. Many English PhD students choose to include history professors as their outside readers for their committees. The History Department website is particularly useful because it provides clear descriptions of courses (<https://history.olemiss.edu/>).

Southern Studies

Many Southern Studies students take English courses to fulfill their degree requirements (the Center for the Study of Southern Culture offers an MA degree) and there are a few Southern Studies courses offered each semester that English students might find useful. The Center also invites guest professors to campus frequently, so you should look for new information each semester if you are interested (<https://southernstudies.olemiss.edu/>).

Gender Studies

Located in the Sarah Isom Center on the lower floor of the Lyceum (entrance is on the south side of the Lyceum), the Gender Studies department is small but rapidly growing. The department offers one or two graduate courses a semester and sponsors a number of special events. Students with research interests in Gender Studies and interdisciplinary work can choose to complete the Graduate Certificate in Gender Studies, which requires twelve hours of coursework related to gender and/or women's issues. More information about the Sarah Isom Center and the Graduate Certificate in Gender Studies can be found at the Center's website (<https://sarahisomcenter.org/>).

IX. UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

This list is not comprehensive since the university continues to add many wonderful resources every year. To make the most of your graduate study pay attention to campus-wide emails, online calendars, fliers and posters, and university website updates.

The Graduate School and Graduate Student Council

The Graduate School staff is extremely helpful and knowledgeable about general graduate questions. The Graduate School staff is located in a small house next to the front entrance of the J.D. Williams Library. Dr. Annette Kluck, the Dean of the Graduate School, works tirelessly to improve graduate student life. Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies Dr. Sandra M. Spiroff (spiroff@olemiss.edu, 662-915-7012) is designated as the first point of contact for any questions and concerns graduate students may have; she can direct you to someone who can help if she doesn't have the answers herself. Michelle Dickson (mdickson@olemiss.edu, 662-915-7474), the financial administrator at The Graduate School, handles questions about summer fellowships and other issues related to financial grants. You can also find useful information about student life on the school's website (<https://gradschool.olemiss.edu/home/>).

The Graduate Student Council works to realize initiatives that will help graduate students in all walks of life. In the past few years the GSC has been responsible for obtaining health insurance for all graduate students and for limiting the number of hours students can be required to work for their fellowships. The GSC regularly sponsors social events, offers professional and personal development workshops, and funds research grants for specific projects each spring and fall. The GSC also works on your behalf to improve graduate life. In addition to four executive officers and four directors, the GSC includes a representative from each department. If you are interested in representing the English Department as a senator, please contact Dr. Whittington and come to the first fall meeting of the GSC in September. For more information on the GSC check the website (<http://gsc.olemiss.edu>).

The four Executive Officers of the GSC will be updated for the 2015-2016 school year when announcement of the new officers is made at the beginning of Fall semester.

In addition to serving as your liaisons to The Graduate School, these officers can also help with problems or concerns for which you need an advocate in your department. Please feel free to contact them directly if you have any questions or want to become involved in GSC.

United Campus Workers of Mississippi

Formed in 2018, the United Campus Workers of Mississippi is a union representing all campus workers, including graduate students. Membership is optional. More information can be found by emailing the union (ucwmississippi@gmail.com) and by visiting the union's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pg/CampusWorkersMS/about/>) and website (<https://ucwms.org/>).

Graduate Reading Room and Copies

There is a Graduate Floor on Mezzanine C, between the second and third floors of the J.D. Williams Library (see this [map](#)). In addition to a quiet space and comfortable chairs, the graduate reading room features study carrels and a graduate photocopier. Each graduate student has access

to free copies with this copier but please use them for necessary Xeroxes since there is a limit to the number of copies each department is granted. Our department's copy code is **9110** and you should enter that number as both the department code and the password. Please hit the "ID" key when you are finished to clear out the code to prevent other students from using our department allocation.

J.D. Williams Library Resources

- Inter-Library Loan: The ILL office is located on the first floor of the library behind the main check-out desk. You can request your ILL copies of articles and books online through the library's website, but you must pick them up at the front desk during ILL office hours. (http://www.olemiss.edu/dsnfepts/general_library/files/ill/home.html). Electronic loans may also be requested. You will not be charged if you don't return ILL books in a timely manner, but they may cut off your ILL privileges. The ILL office does a wonderful job of making texts available quickly, but you should be sure that you leave enough time in your research plan to order and locate the books.
- Study Carrels: Private study carrels are available for reservation at the beginning of each semester. Please see the Administrative Office on the third floor if you want to reserve a carrel. Carrels are an especially good option for students who are studying for comprehensive exams, but they are very difficult to get. They require a \$25 fee up front, but \$20 will be refunded with the return of your key.
- Computers and Copiers: The library has two main computer labs on the first floor, but individual computers are also located on the second and third floors. Printing is available for \$.10 a page and copies are also available for \$.10. You can choose to charge your printouts to your University of Mississippi card account or use change. There is, however, a copier in Special Collections that is solely coin operated. A student computer lab is also available in Weir Hall next to the library.
- Microform/Microfiche/Archival Research: The microform/microfiche archives are located to the left of the help desk on the first floor, next to the computer lab. Although undergraduate students generally don't use this area, the number of machines for use is limited. This area does have both the traditional viewers and the new computerized viewers that allow you to print and save information on a flash drive. The librarians are well-trained in helping you find documents and using the machines.
- Special Collections: Located on the third floor of the library, facing the Lyceum, this office is small but incredibly well managed. In addition to the William Faulkner collections it features collections from Larry Brown, Cormac McCarthy, and other Southern writers. It also contains an extensive blues collection and many political collections. You can make an appointment with a research archivist or simply come to Special Collections during its operating hours.
- Subject Specialist: Alex Watson is our literature bibliographer; you can schedule an appointment with him to receive help with subject-specific research by emailing him at apwatson@olemiss.edu.

Center for the Study of Southern Culture

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture is located in Barnard Observatory near the Student Union. In addition to rotating art exhibits, the center features an archive and hosts a number of

special events throughout the year. The center hosts the Oxford Conference for the Book in the spring, several film/documentary showings, the Faulkner Conference in the summer (which we can attend for free), and Southern Foodways events. Its website is full of useful information on Southern literature and culture (<https://southernstudies.olemiss.edu>).

Graduate Writing Center

The University of Mississippi Graduate Writing Center offers free assistance for graduate students. Highly trained peer consultants work alongside UM students on projects in all disciplines at any stage of the composition process. For English as a First Language students, the Center offers writing groups. Information can be found by emailing, calling, or visiting the Writing Center. For English-as-a-Second-Language students, graduate tutors are available to improve language skills in written thesis, dissertation, or seminar paper work. To make an appointment contact Claire Mischker via the means below.

Location: Lamar Hall, 3rd Floor, Suite C

Email: writingcenter@go.olemiss.edu

Phone: 662-915-7689

Website: writingcenter.olemiss.edu

Graduate Writing Center Director: Dr. Claire Mischker

Email: cbmischk@olemiss.edu

Phone: 662-915-3173

University Counseling Center

Located in Lester Hall, the Counseling Center offers free and confidential counseling for personal issues. Most of the consultants are graduate students working on their degrees in counseling. You can choose to attend one session or several, depending on your need. To schedule an appointment stop by the Counseling Center or call 662-915-3784. You can find out more information about the center's services at <https://counseling.olemiss.edu/>.

Graduate Health Insurance

Graduate students who are also graduate assistants (1/4 time and above) are required to have health insurance. The university offers a heavily subsidized insurance plan to graduate students; you have the option to waive the insurance if you have another plan. Your portion of the insurance premium will come out of your paycheck. Information about the health insurance plan, including premium and copay information, is available on the graduate school's website.

Student Health Center

The student health center offers preventive and acute care medical services, including physical therapy with lab, x-ray, and pharmacy on-site. You are encouraged to call ahead to make appointments, but walk-in appointments are sometimes available. The student health center number is (662) 915-7274. The health center is not open on the weekends.

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) is a university resource for graduate instructors. The CETL offers a teaching orientation at the beginning of the school year, usually the week before classes start, in addition to regular instructional events and workshops.

The Center also sponsors an annual Graduate Instructor/Teaching Assistant Excellence in Teaching Award, for which English graduate students should apply. For more information about the center, which is located at 105 Hill Hall, call 662-915-1391 or email (CETL@olemiss.edu). A calendar of events is available <https://cetl.olemiss.edu/>.

The Career Center

Although the Career Center is oriented more toward helping undergraduate students, the center does offer a number of useful services including résumé/CV assistance, interview practice and internship information. The Career Center is located at 303 Martindale (Student Services Building). Call 662-915-7174 or go to the center's website at <https://career.olemiss.edu>.

Campus Recreation

Campus Recreation offers free student access to athletic and training facilities during the fall and spring semesters (there is a fee for summer use unless you are enrolled in summer hours). The South Campus Recreation Center, located just off the central campus on Chucky Mullins Drive, features an indoor climbing wall, three fitness studios, two basketball courts, a multi-activity court, walking/jogging track, and a classroom demonstration kitchen, and is adjacent to the South Campus Rail Trail, a 3-mile graveled trail perfect for cycling, walking, and jogging. The centrally located Turner Center features a swimming pool, racquetball courts, workout room, indoor track, basketball courts, and the headquarters of University of Mississippi Outdoors. In addition, the center offers regular free exercise classes including aerobics, Pilates, yoga, spinning, and Zumba.

You need to bring your student ID for admission, and you must get a "Fit" sticker on your card to participate in exercise classes (just ask the desk staff in the exercise room). Locker and towel services are available for a small per-semester fee, payable at the offices at each recreation center. Also, students who are interested in professional training can purchase a variety of packages with undergraduate and graduate trainers for individualized workouts.

X. GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY

At the University of Mississippi:

- The Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference: Each summer the English Department sponsors a wonderful international conference on William Faulkner's writings. This conference takes place on campus, and, best of all, the department allows us to attend all of the conference events, including some tasty dinners, for free! For more information, visit <http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner/>.
- Southern Writers/Southern Writing: SWSW is a graduate conference sponsored each year by the EGSB and draws national participation. SWSW offers University of Mississippi students a terrific chance to improve their presentation skills or serve the department by volunteering to help with organizing the conference. For a great CV line, consider helping work or chairing the conference! Volunteering as assistant chair one year automatically makes you chair for the subsequent year. For more information, contact the current chair at swwgradconference@gmail.com.
- MissReads: The MFA program hosts a reading series held once a month (sometimes twice) at venues around the square in Oxford. Featuring the work of 1st and 3rd year MFAs, MissReads is the perfect opportunity for folks to unwind during the week and hear their fellow students' work. Be on the lookout for emails about readings throughout the academic year.
- The Arts: In addition to the theatre season at the Ford Center, the university regularly brings exhibitions to the University Museum. You can purchase student tickets to arts events and find out more information at the University Box Office in the lobby of the Student Union.
- Sports: Season tickets and individual games are available online at <https://olemisssports.com/sports/tix>.
- Lectures and Special Events: In addition to the department, the university offers innumerable opportunities to attend free educational and fun events. Check the online calendar at www.olemiss.edu for updates on university events.
- There are also a number of literary events hosted throughout the year, whether it's an open-mike night at Bozarts Gallery on Main Street in Water Valley, the Glitterary queer literary festival in the spring, a reading at the Strawberry Plains Audubon Center in Holly Springs, or author visits and book signings at Off-Square Books right here in Oxford. These events will be promoted on the listservs, Facebook, Instagram, and the bulletin boards around campus.

In Oxford:

- Powerhouse Community Arts Center: Located off University Avenue not far from the Square, the Powerhouse sponsors local art events throughout the year. In addition to film and theatre events, Powerhouse hosts an arts fair twice a month on weekends where you can purchase from local artists. Joining the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council (www.oxfordarts.com) will entitle you to special invitations and discounts on Powerhouse events.

- Thacker Mountain Radio: Thacker Mountain is a fun radio show recorded at Off Square Books and broadcast by Mississippi Public Radio (a subsidiary of NPR). Thacker Mountain presents local music and writers. The shows are free and you can find a complete calendar at www.thackermountain.com.
- Square Books: Our famous independent bookstore located prominently in the Square. Square Books brings in a regular series of writers both local and national. To sign up for the Square Reader, a weekly email with a schedule of events, go to squarebooks.com.
- Double Decker Festival: Double Decker is a large music, food and arts festival in the spring (usually mid or late April). This free festival boasts two stages, dozens of local artists, and some wonderful food sampling.
- Oxford Tourism: For more information on local historical sites, including walking tours of downtown Oxford, stop by City Hall on the Square or the visitor's center just off the Square on Jackson Avenue, next to Uno Mas Restaurant. Or visit: <https://visitoxfordms.com/>.
- Rowan Oak: Rowan Oak, William Faulkner's home, is a free museum located off Old Taylor Road. The home features several acres, a barn, servant's quarters, and the main home, and Faulkner's mint julep cup, of which he made extensive use.

XI. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF...?

I have a question or problem with my student loans?

Contact or stop by the Financial Aid office in Martindale. You can check your loan status online through MyOleMiss.

I have a question or problem with my fellowship stipend?

Contact April Wootten to make sure your fellowship has been processed. If the problem is with your paycheck then you will need to visit Human Resources.

I have an emergency expense?

Although it's not common knowledge, you can apply through Financial Aid for more loan monies by changing your yearly expense estimates. Also, you are eligible for a one time loan of up to \$3,000 for a personal computer.

I have a problem with an undergraduate student in my class?

You should contact your professor (if you are a T.A.) or the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct (CRSC) to resolve the issue. You can also access forms relating to concerns about students at <https://umatter.olemiss.edu/resources-for-persons-of-concern/>.

I have a great idea for a new service opportunity or event?

You need to take the initiative to share your idea, develop and implement it. Not only will your initiative look great on your CV, but you will be benefiting the university and your fellow students. Email the Director of Graduate Studies or one of the EGSB officers to discuss your idea!

I need to take a leave of absence?

You must file a request to take a leave of absence through the department and the Graduate School. If you decide to take a leave of absence, be sure to ask follow-up questions about the status of your funding, coursework and financial aid.

I need to take an incomplete in one of my classes?

You should speak directly with the professor before you decide to take an incomplete and you should set a reasonable timetable for finishing the work. Taking an incomplete creates extra work for the professor, so please consider this carefully before acting.

I want to change my director?

Talk to the director of graduate studies about the reasons you wish to change your advisor. You must update your committee composition online (see instructions [here](#)) and you must have the approval of the new director.

I have a question that isn't answered in this handbook?

Contact the Director of Graduate Studies.

XII. TEN TIPS FOR SURVIVING GRADUATE SCHOOL

(suggested and submitted by former and current grad students)

- 1. Find a mentor or two** – the English dept. at University of Mississippi is chock full of talented and helpful professors. Get to know them and their research interests. You will need an advisor as well committee members, so be on the lookout for professors whose interests resonate with your own and cultivate those relationships. Remember to keep an open mind: your committee members might have similar research interests even if they do not work on the same books you do. Ideally you will find an advisor that can give you advice, guide your research, introduce you to important people in your field and, most importantly, encourage you when you need it most. Your advisor will be your closest working relationship, but remember too that they do not have to be your only one; you can also seek support and more general advice about navigating grad school from other professors you jibe with. So identify the people who can help you here and nurture those connections.
- 2. Be open about your dissertation project** – Every student who entered the PhD program in my class said they were coming to University of Mississippi to study one thing and are currently working on something different. For example, one recently came here to study Victorian-era novels and has now “gone Medieval,” as she likes to say. Allow yourself to be swayed by what you learn in your classes and in your discussions with your peers. If you have a Master’s thesis focused on Chesnut (for example), it’s okay to do your PhD on someone or something else. It’s actually a good move for your career because it gives you variety in the courses you’re qualified to teach.
- 3. Eat and Sleep** – This might sound like common sense, but for some it hasn’t been. Be aware of your diet – too much chicken-on-a-stick from the corner Chevron at 2 in the morning will not sustain you. Three hours of sleep will not make you ready to teach that 8 a.m. class or to be very involved in the discussion in your own classes. One professor on our faculty suggests that the best way to survive graduate school is to “eat good food, drink good wine, and spend your time with good people,” which leads us to our next point...
- 4. Don’t Isolate. Have Fun.** – While you’re focusing on eating properly and getting the required 8 hours of sleep, don’t forget to cut loose with your friends as well. The trick to this is to only do it once a week or so. Periodic carousing is good for the soul. You’ll need these people to help you deal, to help you vent, to give you ideas when you’re stuck, not to mention they’re about to become some of your greatest friends – people who you will most likely remain in contact with throughout your career. No one else is going to understand exactly what you went through in graduate school the ways the people around you right now will.
- 5. Get Your Syllabus Early** – Most professors have their syllabus ready to go a week or so before classes start. As soon as you know what classes you’re going to take, email your professors, let them know you’ll be in their class and that you’d like an advance copy of the syllabus and book list whenever it’s ready. This gives you a few advantages and opportunities. 1) Financially speaking, it gives you time to order your books from Amazon or some other place that will charge you MUCH less than our campus bookstore. 2) If you have all of your syllabi before the beginning of the semester, you’re able to figure out your reading and writing schedules in

advance. 3) It also gives you time to get a jump start on the reading for the semester and to start thinking about what papers you want to write.

6. Figure Out Your Schedule In Advance – You will find your life is much simpler if you set aside hours for study, hours for rest and relaxation, hours for taking the dog for a walk, days during which you'd like to visit home, or whatever else you need to do in your daily life. A grad program can and will swallow you whole if you do not schedule in time for things OTHER than that which is required for school.

7. Create Your Syllabus Early and Stick To It – Once you've acted as a TA for a year and taken English 617, you'll be eligible to act as instructor of record for a Comp I or Comp II course. As soon as you know what class you're scheduled to teach, you should begin working on your syllabus. Decide what course texts you want to use, order them, and create a COMPLETE syllabus with a run-down of what you will do EVERY DAY of the class. DO NOT TRY TO WING IT. Nothing will create more stress in your life than having to come up with something to do in your class every week. Have it done before the semester starts and stick to it. If you find that you've over-planned and cannot possibly do everything you wanted to, that's okay. You can go through and delete certain activities or assignments (the students will love you for that) if you find it necessary.

Don't hesitate to ask someone who has already taught a class for which you're preparing a syllabus if you can take a look at the syllabus they used. We're all usually pretty willing to share teaching materials.

NEVER, and I mean NEVER, schedule a paper or major project (meaning something that will take you a LOT of time to grade) to be due when YOUR papers and major projects are due. When you're TAing, you may not have as much say in this as you will when you're teaching your own class, but it's perfectly okay to talk with the professor you're TAing for and work out those due dates. On most occasions, they will not mind moving around some dates to accommodate you. After all, you're the one doing all the grading.

8. Begin Work On Your Papers Early – In addition to other assignments, you will have a major project due at the end of the semester for each class you're enrolled in – usually in the form of a paper. Your professors will expect you to use outside resources for this paper or project – not only the course texts. If you're in a class that focuses on one author – like Faulkner – then it will be vitally important that you get to the library and get the books you think you're going to need early because everyone else in that class will most likely need those same books. Don't get the books and keep them for the entire semester so that your classmates are screwed. Instead, get the books early, begin reading them, take notes on them, photocopy important passages, create a works cited entry for them and then return them to the library so your other classmates can use them. The bonus is that you'll have all of your notes completed early in the semester rather than scrambling for books during the last two weeks (when everyone else is also scrambling).

Also, as soon as you can decide on a paper topic for your class – DO IT. The earlier you decide, the more time you'll have to write the paper. If you're unsure, talk with your professor about

your ideas, your interests and get their advice for the kind of paper you might write for this course. DO NOT wait until the end of the semester.

9. Read all of Your Assignments and Participate in Discussion – You are in a grad program in English at the University of Mississippi. What employers expect from you when you leave that program is to be an expert in your field. The only way to become an expert is to do the work. Read the texts assigned to you. Ask questions. Argue with your classmates during class if they're making a point you disagree with or see differently. There may be people in your classes who are clearly not doing the reading and who do not participate in the discussions. That's fine. Don't worry about them. This is YOUR career, YOUR life, YOUR decision to be here. Make the most of it.

10. Don't Give Up – There will come a time when you just want to quit. You'll wonder why you're here doing this work. You'll be frustrated, overwhelmed, exhausted, and annoyed. You'll think that it's too much to handle, that it would be easier to drop out and teach high school. You may even start to think that coming here to get an advanced degree was a selfish move. You'll be right, and you won't be alone. Every graduate student has these thoughts at one point or another. But quitting will not get you the degree you came here to earn. Quitting will not land you that sweet tenure-track position that gives you the life you want. And the truth is, you CAN handle it. You were picked out of a pool of hundreds of applicants. Getting through just takes a few tricks, a lot of dedication and determination, and the desire to finish.