

The New Student's Guide to Life in the English M.A. Program @ Rutgers-Newark

FINDING US: *The Graduate English Director's office* is in Hill Hall 529. To contact the Director or make an appointment, call 973-353-5279 x529, leave a message in her faculty mailbox, write <engma@andromeda.rutgers.edu>, or send a letter to Dr. Janet Larson, English Department, Hill Hall 504, Rutgers University, Newark NJ 07102. *The English Department*, chaired by Dr. Virginia Tiger, is located on the 5th floor of Hill Hall. The main office, Hill 504, is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday–Thursday, to 4 p.m. on Friday (973-353-5279 x504). Ms. Madelyn Munoz Bertram, the Department Administrator, handles Special Permission numbers to get into the occasional class. Our spot in cyberspace is open 24/7 at <<http://english-newark.rutgers.edu>>.

The Rutgers-Newark Graduate School offices are on Hill Hall's 4th floor, on the left end of the long hall—conveniently right under the English Department. They're open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 or 5:00 p.m. weekdays (973-353-5834 x10). Assistant Dean Bautista handles such matters as readmission, graduation forms, and special requests (973-353-5834 x17 or <claireb@andromeda.rutgers.edu>). The GS-N catalogue is on their web site—or under Newark at <<http://gradstudy.rutgers.edu>>.

The Campus Switchboard number is 973-353-1766.

How do I find English faculty? A bulletin board near the Department office lists their offices (mostly on the 5th floor Hill corridor) and current hours. You can also look them up through the People search function on the R-N home page <www.newark.rutgers.edu>. A few have their own web sites. To reach them by phone, dial the English Department (973-353-5279) and the person's 3-digit extension, which usually matches the office room number. Drop in during your professors' conference hours, posted on their doors. Faculty mail boxes are in Hill 505, the Department xerox room.

Who is my faculty advisor? After advising new degree students during their first term, the Director assigns them to a colleague, attempting to make a good match. Students may also request a particular advisor. The advisor list is posted right next to the *graduate student mailboxes*, in the hall across from Hill 504. We emphasize good advising here—to help keep everyone on track and make the most of their graduate experience—and we expect students to meet with their faculty advisors in person at least once a year. There is no substitute for face-to-face conversation, in which one may garner unexpected tips about negotiating the program, the interests of other faculty, career ideas, and contacts as well as course registration advice. The Program Director is available for advice on a continuing basis to all students. *International students* are advised as well by Janine Maslov in the Office of International Student Services, Conklin Hall 152, 120 (973-353-1427). Her e-mail: <jnm@andromeda.rutgers.edu>.

COMMUNICATIONS: *How do I get Graduate Program announcements and keep informed?* Each student is assigned a shared mailbox, a wall installation across from Hill 504, handy for course paper returns and occasional handouts from us, not valuables. Our main communication method is by e-mail on a listserv managed by Professor Jack Lynch,

<gradlit@andromeda.rutgers.edu>. The Director and other faculty can send to it but cannot read what students write each other on it. If you'd like to get on it, or if your contact information changes, it's important to let Dr. Larson, Dr. Lynch <jlynch@andromeda.rutgers.edu> , and the Registrar know.

We post announcements about publication possibilities, calls for papers, conferences, lectures, jobs, and more on the Graduate Program bulletin board to the left of the mailboxes. Posters about advanced graduate study at other institutions are in the elevator hall.

COURSES & CREDITS: How do I apply for transfer credit? Pick up a request form from the Graduate School, fill most of it out, and give it to the Director along with a syllabus from the course you wish to transfer and a copy of the school's catalogue course description making clear what program the course belongs to. (We should already have the transcript.) Up to 12 credits of graduate courses comparable to ours can be transferred on approval of the English Graduate Program Director and Dean Bautista after the student has taken 12 credits here. See the paper GS-N 2004-2006 Catalogue, p. 22, for details.

How do I set up an independent study? Most students take seminars but can also propose a subject area to a professor with the requisite expertise, work out a plan of study together, and set up a schedule of regular meetings through the semester. It's best to arrange this during the semester before the study begins. The student then registers for Independent Study 350:522, Readings in Literature (350:698), or Advanced Readings (350:699)—although note that the 698 and 699 numbers are occasionally used for a seminar on a special topic. If you wish to do a ***Master's Thesis*** (350:696, 697), read that handout first, in the rack outside 504, for a discussion of the pros, the cons, and the means; take this question up with your faculty advisor; and inform Dr. Larson once a plan is set. The Graduate School has formal requirements for submission of the completed thesis.

Are there summer graduate courses? Although most professors are engaged in research and writing in the summer, we sometimes offer graduate courses in the Summer Session. In special cases the Graduate Director can approve a student's taking a summer undergraduate course for graduate ("G") credit; it is up to the student to secure the professor's agreement first. There will be additional assignments and an extended time frame to complete a seminar paper.

Can literature students take writing courses? The R-N Graduate School will offer a Master's Degree in Fine Arts, Creative Writing, starting Fall 2007, directed by Jayne Anne Phillips <<http://www.mfa.newark.rutgers.edu>>. The English MA Program offers a literature degree and no longer has a writing "track." Matriculated students can, however, take up to four writing electives (12 cr.) under the 350 number, depending on course availability. The main courses are:

- * *Creative Writing: Prose I* (517) and *Creative Writing: Prose II* (518). These courses may be taken more than once since the workshop are different each time.
- * *Advanced Fiction Writing* (617) may also be taken more than once.
- * *Introduction to Publishing and Editing* (531), offered periodically. *Publishing and Editing Internship* (548) is by special arrangement.
- * "Genre courses," offered periodically: *Nonfictions* (523), *Poetry for Poets* (524), *Fiction for Fiction Writers* (525), *Biography, Autobiography, Memoir* (527), and other autobiography courses given under *Topics in Literature* (521) or under *Literary Topics in Women's and Gender Studies* (568). Students who wish to take a genre offering as a

writing course must arrange with the professor for some special assignments and inform the Program Director.

- * Writing workshops for 3 graduate credits at the *Rutgers-Camden Summer Writing Conference*, a rich, intensive experience with established authors each June. *The Rutgers-Camden English MA Program* also offers writing courses during the year, although space is limited. For information see their English Department site at www.camden.rutgers.edu.

Graduate writing course credits from other institutions and summer workshops can be transferred on the MA Program Director's approval.

Do you offer a Certificate in Creative Writing?

The English MA Program has no certificates. However, a graduating student may request a letter from the Director certifying that he/she is a serious, productive creative writer who has taken four writing electives. Such a letter might be offered, for example, to school authorities by a high school teacher who wants to teach creative writing there.

WORK ON CAMPUS: How do I get teaching experience while studying for my degree? Rutgers-Newark has the most diverse undergraduate population—in nationalities and ethnicities—in the United States. The best way to start tapping into this resource once you arrive, and get to know our vibrant community of graduate tutors, is to work at the Newark Writing Center, directed by our colleague Patricia Bender, a wonderful mentor. Pay is competitive. Stop by Conklin Hall 126 (street level) to put in an application, download one at www.andromeda.rutgers.edu/~nwc, call (973) 353-5847, or write the Center at nwc@andromeda.rutgers.edu.

Occasionally our students are hired to teach freshman writing after being here at least one semester. Prior experience helps; so does taking Rhetorical Theory and the Teaching of Writing (506), offered periodically by our Program. Contact Prof. Elizabeth Mitchell, Interim Director of the undergraduate ***Writing Program*** (973-353-5851 or jonhall1@att.net). You may leave a note and resumé for her in Conklin 137 and ask the Graduate Director for a reference.

The English Department Chair sometimes hires graduate students to teach undergraduate literature courses for which their knowledge and experience are well-matched. When such a rare opportunity comes along, the Graduate Director connects the student with the Chair.

Mary Moya, Director of the R-N ***Program in American Language Studies***, welcomes graduate student applicants with teaching experience to staff their ESL courses (973-353-5013, mmoya@andromeda.rutgers.edu). Within a block of the campus, the ***New Jersey Institute of Technology*** (Dr. Coakley or Dr. Lynch, 973-596-3266) and ***Essex Community College*** next door also hire our students and alums to teach English courses. Not far away is ***Seton Hall University***; contact Professor Mary Balkun balkunma@shu.edu, English Department Chair, and cc Professor Nancy Enright, director of freshman writing, at enrighna@shu.edu.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES on campus or nearby:

University Human Resources (973-353-5500). Stop by to fill out a job application in Blumenthal Hall Room 201, 249 University Ave. (across the playing field from Warren St.).

Career Development Center (Thomas Hopkins, 973-353-5313) has employment listings off campus. Located one ramp up from the Plaza level of Hill Hall.

Paul Robeson Campus Center (Ressie Mayo, 973-353-5568). Stop by in their main office,

2nd floor, to put in an application.

Golden Dome Athletic Center, corner of University and Warren Streets, site of the fitness center, gym, and swimming pool, has hired our graduate students with expertise as personal trainers and coaches (Dept. of Intercollegiate Athletics, 973-353-5474 x 203). Call the campus switchboard for individual sports (including baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, tennis, volleyball, and more).

BOOKS & COMPUTERS: How do I contact Dana Library? Circulation and Reserve (973-353-5161); Reference (5901); InterLibrary Loan (5903); Media Services on the 4th floor (5917). Make good use of Dana's seasoned Reference Librarian staff and ask them about workshops for people new to the system. To find the Rutgers Libraries home page, which will get you to IRIS, the online University catalogue, go to www.rutgers.edu and click on "Libraries." On line you can order up books, periodicals, articles, and micro-media from other Rutgers libraries besides Dana, request materials through Inter-Library Loan, view professors' Electronic and Book Reserves, and access research databases.

What are the local book stores? The U Bookstore is in Bradley Hall 1st floor; New Jersey Books (independent; has used texts) is at 167 University Ave., at Bleeker St. (973-624-5383).

Where can I use computers on campus? Computer labs, funded by student fees and naturally in heavy demand, are located in Hill Hall first floor, Englehard Hall 311 and 313, and the Law School library. You can bring disks to print out free, check e-mail, and use special programs such as Power Point. Dana also has computers in Media Services (4th floor) and the Reference room, where one can access sites to which the library subscribes, such as the *New York Times*, academic journals, electronic literary texts, and other databases. More computers are at the R Place in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, next to Starbuck's.

LIVING & SOCIALIZING: Do graduate students live on campus? Talbott Apartments, on Bleeker Street just across from the Plaza, is for graduate students only, as are several floors of a new complex, University Square, on University Ave. just beyond Bleeker St. Tim Johnson, Director of Housing and Residence Life, can be reached at 973-353-1037. For information, applications, and deadlines, see <http://housing.newark.rutgers.edu>..

How can I meet other students outside classes? Ten ideas: (1) Get involved in *graduate student government*. Besides taking up academic concerns, this body uses student fee monies in making funding decisions about special programs and social events. The English Program has representatives. One could be you! (2) Come to *English Department and MFA Program readings, lectures, forums, and parties*, even if it's not your day to be on campus. Become acquainted with professors, too, in more informal settings, too. (3) Get involved in "*Gradlit*" *listserv discussions*. Find out through them and your classmates where students are currently hanging out after class (McGovern's is a good guess). Faculty can write to the Gradlit community but cannot read other messages sent on it. (4) Write for the *Observer*, the campus newspaper, located in the Campus Center Rm. 237 (973-353-5023) www.rutgersobserver.com..

(5) Keep your eye on *our bulletin boards* and other spaces around Hill for announcements of campus lectures, performances, film showings, and conferences. The *Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience*, the *Institute of Jazz Studies*, the *Joseph C. Cornwall Center for*

Metropolitan Studies, the *Global Studies Program*, the *Women's Studies Program*, the *Rutgers-Newark School of Law*, the *Robeson Center Gallery*, and the nearby *Newark Museum* and *Newark Public Library* all enrich our community with such events. You'll also find listings of campus activities on the <www.newark.rutgers.edu> site and at the Robeson Center information desk.

(6) Stop in at the Center's Starbucks and see who's there. (7) Join the vibrant community of Writing Center graduate tutors. (8) Find someone in your class who lives in Talbott Apartments or U Square and hang out with them. (9) Set up a study group with other members of your seminar. Such groups also form to study for the M.A. Exam. (10) Invite classmates to start up a music group, or organize a poetry slam, a graduate symposium, or a teach-in on current political issues. Attend a graduate student conference in the area together—there are several each year.

Where do we eat? The really important question! **Robeson Center** has a cafeteria, Starbucks, and a convenience store with snacks and microwave food. (The English Department's lunchroom microwave is available during office hours.) When the weather is nice, make the tables in the Plaza under the trees your café.

Serious meals are available at **Stonsby Commons**, located next to the campus housing complex on Bleecker St.. Up to 4:30 or so, try the **lunch truck**—gyros and cheap edibles—parked near Hill Hall's second floor entrance, on Martin Luther King Drive. For the hardy there's the hot dog truck outside Bradley Hall.

Woodrow's (61 New St.), just off Washington St. near the Law School, is a pleasant family-owned restaurant, with in and outdoor seating, serving an array of hot and cold healthy food, sandwiches, and pastries. Venture a little farther on foot and you'll find ethnic eateries, delis, pubs, and pizza joints in this area. Just beyond Newark's Penn Station is the city's **Ironbound section** for terrific Portuguese fare. In fine weather, bring your own lunch to eat in the garden at the Newark Museum just two blocks from campus. While you're on a study break, saunter over and have a look at the museum's fine collection.

- * Advanced Professional and Technical Communications (ENG 601) and one other specified offering (6 credits total) in the *M.S. in Professional and Technical Communication Program* at New Jersey Institute of Technology, across the street from the R-N campus, with the permission of both graduate directors. 601, the “prerequisite or corequisite” for all PTC courses, requires advanced computer skills, gives training in WebCT, NJIT's common software environment, and is offered through Distance Learning. For the second course, Cultural and Technological Change (ENG 603) or Professional and Technical Editing (ENG 624) may be taken for degree credit by R-N English students when offered in a traditional classroom format. The MS PTC Director is Dr. Nancy Coppola (973-596-5726). See <<http://www.njit.edu/MSPTC/curriculum.html>> for their course descriptions.