



Student to Student

A Supplement to the RTC Handbook and Graduate Student
Professional Development Guides

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Introduction	3
Dr. Elizabeth A. Flynn	
A Quick Start Guide to the J.R. Van Pelt Library Resources.....	4
Diane Koskela	
How to Write a Graduate-Level Seminar Paper	11
Rehema Clarcken	
A Measured and Strategic Approach to Technology as a Student and Teacher in MTU's Rhetoric and Technical Communication Graduate Program	17
David Clanaugh	
Teaching with Technology	23
David B. Karnosky	
When to Follow Directions, When to Look Out for Yourself: Forming Committees for a Humanities Doctoral Degree	27
Kevin Hodur	
Service in the Name of Humanities	32
James A. Rudkin	
Side by Side: Opportunities for Graduate Students to Participate in Undergraduate Student Organizations	37
Russell Johnson	
Academic Publishing for Graduate Students: A Brief Overview.....	42
Rebecca Frost	
Teaching at Tech: Opportunities for Graduate Students in the Rhetoric and Technical Communication Program	49
Carly Long	
About the Contributors.....	55

Introduction

The final writing assignment for the second term, Spring, 2008, of the one-credit, two-term course, HU 5001, Proseminar in Rhetoric and Technical Communication, was as follows:

In an essay of at least 5 pages (approximately 1250 words), provide information to future RTC graduate students about the program or about ways of succeeding in graduate school. References to Moore and Miller and/or Semenza and the RTC Handbook would be helpful. We will aim to collectively produce a document that would supplement the RTC Handbook. Submit a proposal (a paragraph or two in length) for your essay week 7.

In the first term of the course, students read the RTC Handbook, Cindy Moore and Hildy Miller's *A Guide to Professional Development for Graduate Students in English* (Urbana: NCTE, 2006), and the first three chapters of Gregory Semenza's *Graduate Study for the 21st Century: How to Build an Academic Career in the Humanities* (New York: Palgrave, 2005). They read the remainder of the Semenza book spring term along with Chris M. Golde and George E. Walker's *Envisioning the Future of Doctoral Education: Preparing Stewards of the Discipline* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.)

Following is the result of their considerable efforts. Thanks to my assistant for 2007-2008, Karen Springsteen, for editing and producing the document. I am looking forward to adding the supplement to the required texts for the 2008-2009 proseminar.

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Diane Koskela



A Quick Start Guide to the J.R. Van Pelt Library Resources

One of the most challenging and time consuming activities of the graduate student is the research and writing of seminar papers. As is often the case, locating pertinent research material constitutes the major part of the work and consumes an inordinate amount of time, a valuable commodity that is often in short supply. As in any occupation, a necessary component to producing quality, first-class work—in this case scholarly work—is having access to, and knowing where to find the materials necessary to complete the task. In order to promote efficiency, the wise graduate student might do well to familiarize herself early in her graduate studies with an obvious, but often unutilized, campus resource: the J.R. Van Pelt/Opie Library.

The newly renovated library hosts a wide range of resource material from the reference stacks and main collections, magazines and newspapers from around the globe (some foreign language), government documents, and archives. The library is an invaluable resource with its online databases and catalogs, electronic journals, and Interlibrary Loan. In the new state-of-the art Digital Studio, the Michigan Tech community can access industry standard media software and hardware and print and laminate materials using high-quality, professional-grade equipment.

Perhaps the most valuable and accessible resource the Library has to offer is the knowledgeable and helpful staff. Reference librarians are most eager to meet with groups and individual students and assist students collaborating on projects. Library tours are routinely offered to incoming students, or they may be arranged at other times. As a new student, you should familiarize yourself with this valuable resource and build rapport with those individuals who can help you in your research and save precious time.

This “guide” will attempt to offer information on what resources and services are available to you as a member of Tech’s community. Because of the ever-changing nature of technology and services, the most up-to-date information is available on the J.R. Van Pelt Library’s website <www.lib.mtu.edu>.

Facts

The recently renovated library has a total 134,300 square feet, includes 22 small group study rooms, and seating for over 900. It has the capacity to house over 900,000 volumes in its 11.5 miles of shelving.

Online Resources

JRVP Online Catalog

<<http://catalog.lib.mtu.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=First>>

If you are looking for a particular book, journal article, or U.S. document, start by searching the JRVP online catalog. You will get a Library of Congress call number for the material you are looking for. If the JRVP Library has the material, the location and call number will tell you where to find it in the library. If the library does not have the material, you can search additional databases to determine if it is available through Interlibrary Loan (see below) and request that it be sent to you via the JRVP Library.

Databases

<<http://www.lib.mtu.edu/eresources/eresearch/eresearch.aspx>>

Of the Library's approximately 230 databases, 29 are of particular relevance to the Arts, Language and Literature. JSTOR (short for Journal Storage), Modern Language Association (MLA), and Alternative Press Index (gender studies) are among three of the most valuable databases for Humanities students. You can also access dissertations by Michigan Tech graduate students that are available free for download. On the database page enter **dissertations** in the search box. If you wish to access dissertations from non-Michigan Tech students, search in the World Cat database. Complete texts of non-Michigan Tech dissertations and theses are available for a fee.

E-Journals

<<http://www.lib.mtu.edu/eresources/eresearch/ejournals.aspx>>

The Library has over 30,000 e-journals, with 3,684 of them pertinent to the Arts and Humanities. Users can browse by category and sub categories or search by title. Click on "Go Fetch" or "HuskyFetch" to retrieve the full-text. It might be worthwhile for a student unfamiliar with the resources of the Library to browse the e-journals and get a sense of the range of reference material that is available.

Article Citations

<<http://www.lib.mtu.edu/eresources/eresearch/articles.aspx>>

Article Citations is a useful tool but is limited only to journals. *Article1st* has bibliographic citations for over 12,600 journals in all disciplines. When searching the database, if the requested information is available in electronic format, it comes up during the search. If it does not come up, you can search the JRVP Online Catalog, and if MTU does not have the wanted journal, it can be requested from Interlibrary Loan (ILLiad).

Interlibrary Loan (ILLiad)

<<https://illiad.lib.mtu.edu/logon.html>>

Many books and articles not in the JRVP Library collections can be obtained from other libraries by completing an ILL request form. This service is free. Some materials may only be checked out for short periods of time, so plan accordingly. Electronic delivery is available for some articles (you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer).

MeLCat and Other Online Catalogs

<<http://www.lib.mtu.edu/eresources/othercatalogs.aspx>>

Through the Library's website you can access the following catalogs:

- **MeLCat:** Some materials not available through ILL are available through MeLCat (Michigan e-Library Catalog). Resource materials include books, videos, CDs, and DVDs.
- **WorldCat:** catalog of millions of biographical records and library holding information.
- **LIB:** The LIB (Library of Congress) catalog of over 130 million items, including Prints and Photographs Online Catalog (PPOC), and the Sound Online Inventory & Catalog (SONIC)
- **Northern Michigan University Library Catalog:** a joint endeavor of the libraries of Northern Michigan University, Lake Superior State University, Gogebic Community College, and Finlandia University.
- **Portage Lake District Library:** many K-12, college and libraries across Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Materials can be requested from Interlibrary Loan (ILLiad). Typical turnaround time is 3-5 working days for in-state; out-of-state may take longer.

E-Books

<<http://www.lib.mtu.edu/eresources/ebooks.aspx>>

Users can access electronic full-text versions of books and journals from the Library's E-Books web page. Materials include: NetLibrary, Cliff Notes, Making of America, Michigan County Histories, National Academy Press, Project Gutenberg, The Online Books Page, Wright American Fiction 1851-1875. These databases offer a wide-range of books, reference material, scholarly monographs, fiction and literature, Cliff Notes, historical works, and Michigan County History.

Finding Print Materials in the JRVP Library

Periodicals/Journals

After searching the JRVP Online Catalog, the call number and location will direct you to the Current Journals (located on the first floor behind the Information Wall), the Serials Collection (located on the garden level), of the Microforms Collection (available in microfilm or microfiche) on the second floor.

Reference & Book Collections

You will find much of the print research material you will need in the reference collections (2nd floor), and the book collections (third floor). Reference librarians are extremely helpful in locating materials, so seek their help if you are unsure. In addition, adjacent to the third floor book collections there is a lounge area offering new books, popular collections, and paperbacks.

Newspapers and Magazines

Newspapers and subscription magazines, including some in foreign languages, are located in the lounge area on the main floor.

Government Documents

Government Documents and maps are located downstairs in the SW corner of the garden level. The University's Gov Docs collection consists of approximately 470,000 print and 490,000 microfiche items, and the Michigan Depository has approximately 12,000 print items. The documents available are mainly those of local interest and those which support the mission of the University departments.

Archives

The Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections are located on the garden level, and their holdings include University records, local information, local newspaper archives on microfilm, rare books, and historical materials related to the Copper Country and Western Upper Peninsula. The Collections includes an extensive assortment of local and mining photographs and memorabilia. Librarians can assist patrons with genealogy searches and identifying and locating local information.

Course Reserve

<<http://catalog.lib.mtu.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?PAGE=rbSearch&DB=local>>

Print copies are stored on the first floor in Course Reserve (or ask at the Circulation Desk). Course reserves are also available electronically and can be accessed online from the Library's homepage by searching for instructor, course, or department.

JRVP Resources and Services

Digital Studio

The Library's multi-media lab is located on the 2nd floor and is available for use at no charge to all MTU students, staff, and faculty. The center has professional quality hardware, including computers running industry-standard multi-media software (Adobe and Macromedia Suites and Nero programs), allowing users to edit video, audio, and image files, and print and online presentation materials. Other media equipment includes: scanners, mini-DV to VHS converters, CD/DVD burners, black & white and color printers, digital camera multi-card readers, ArcGIS workstation, and a large format scanner/printer. While there is no charge to use the hardware and software, a small fee may be charged for special materials (i.e., photo quality paper, CDs, DVDs). In addition, the Digital Studio has a heavy duty 3-hole punch, heavy duty paper cutter, rolling white board and markers, and a laminator.

Technical Services and Equipment Resources

The Library is wireless and students, staff and faculty may connect to Tech's network by logging in using a valid MTU user ID and your ISO password. Guest Access (for visitors) is available at the Circulation desk on the first floor, along with several public use computers. The Library also offers coin-operated photocopying and laser printing, transparency printing (transparencies are available for purchase), microform-printing, and public computer printing. Laptops for Library use only are available for check out in 2-3 hour blocks.

There is a DVD and VCR on the first floor near the Information Wall and a 24-hour Study Area on the first floor.

The Library has two Assistive Services devices: a telecommunications device to assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired, and a magnifier. Information of the Library's Assistive Services may be obtained at the Circulation desk.

Tutorials

<<http://www.lib.mtu.edu/reference/tutorials/>>

The Library's website offers tutorials on tips for using search engines, online catalog tutorials, understanding the research project, vendor supported tutorials, and tutorials related to presenting and citing your research papers.

Resources Links on Library Website

<<http://www.lib.mtu.edu/eresources/recsites/recsitesearch.aspx>>

In addition to the services offered by the Library, the Recommended Websites link on the main page contains a compilation of useful information for research projects such as links to Acronyms & Initialisms; Almanacs & Statistical Sources; Biography; Calendars & Holidays; Dictionaries & Encyclopedias; Journal Abbreviations; Calculators & Unit Converters; Copyright; History; Language & Linguistics; Literature; Maps & Geography; Philosophy & Religion; Rhetoric; and Style Manuals & Citation Guides.

Special Services

- Teaching Assistants and Instructors can arrange to bring students over for instruction for using the resources of the Digital Center and library tours.
- Reference librarians are available to help students locate information on research topics and develop a strategy for research papers.
- Librarians can assist students in using databases and library resources. The Library offers dissertation and theses binding services.

Conclusion

The faculty, staff, and your colleagues in the Humanities department welcome you and offer support and encouragement as you embark upon your academic endeavors at Michigan Tech. While the Humanities department is committed to providing assistance and resources that foster scholarly pursuit, research, and teaching, it also strongly encourages you to take advantage of other services and resources that are available to you as a member of the campus community. With its wealth of information, the newly renovated J. Robert Van Pelt Library offers a

wide-range of resources, from its online databases and catalogs, electronic journals, Interlibrary Loan and book collections, to the new media Digital Studio. If you are a new student or have not recently visited the Library, consider taking a tour and speaking with a reference librarian, who will be more than happy to answer your questions and help you navigate the resources available to you. If you are student teaching, consider taking your class to the Library where librarians can provide support and consultation services for collaborative research projects. Schedule a tour of the new Digital Studio and learn about the available media resources that will enhance your presentation and teaching materials. We are pleased that you are part of the Humanities community and we look forward to a robust exchange of ideas, knowledge, and friendship.

Rehema Clarcken



How to Write a Graduate-Level Seminar Paper

It seems that at this point in your education you should know how to write a graduate-level seminar paper, but, truth be told, very few of us have ever had explicit instruction on how to write this kind of document. If we are lucky, we have a mentor, an instructor, a classmate, or a writing coach who walks us through the steps, but most of us learn the ropes by floundering around and falling down. In the following few pages, I will share with you my particular process of writing a paper based on my personal experiences writing, teaching writing, and reading about writing. I hope that my ideas are a useful supplement to the suggestions that Gregory Sememza makes in “Chapter 5: The Seminar Paper” of *Graduate Study for the 21st Century* where he discusses how to construct reading lists and serious arguments among other things.

Choosing a Topic

Before you enter a seminar on the first day of class, you have a set of preferences, interests, and passions that make you yourself—a distinct individual with distinctive tastes. These preferences contribute to who you are and how you define yourself; often these interests are easy for you to pursue since you are quite passionate about them.

Throughout your undergraduate career you often had to study topics that you were not interested in; as a graduate student, you will finally be able to spend most of your time studying what you want. Your choice of universities, graduate programs, and professors gives you control over what you study even before syllabi and assignments are ever handed out. However, even after all of those particulars have come to pass, you still have significant control over the direction of your education.

My first recommendation is to cultivate a general list of topics which you have researched in the past, or which have recently become very interesting to you. Many great writing instructors, such as Donald Murray, suggest that you keep a small notebook on hand to jot down all your brilliant ideas both big and small. Anne Mareck, a recent RTC graduate, recommends keeping a list of great titles for future works whereas others encourage you to create a list of possible

research questions. The following (Figure 1) is an example of the lists I have generated to help guide my selection of research topics for seminar classes.

<i>Topics</i>	<i>Titles</i>	<i>Questions</i>
Composition Pedagogy ESL Rhetoric E-learning Diversity & Culture	<i>Teaching ESL Students to Write in Academic Environments</i> <i>The Hegemony of Rhetoric: The Rhetoric of Hegemony</i>	Why/how is the rigor of composition studies minimized by rhetoricians? Should schools use e-learning environments? If so, how?

Figure 1: Topics, Titles, & Questions to help prepare to write a research paper

Once you are aware of your general interests, it is important to look at what you will be studying and teaching in all of your classes during the semester. Often you will have dozens of books to get through within a few months, so use these reading assignments and class discussions to your advantage by thinking of research topics that can borrow from all of these different sources. If it is at all possible, don't make unnecessary work for yourself by choosing a topic that will require you to explore issues not touched on in your classes and readings during the semester. Consider clustering your research topics for all of your classes so that one source will be able to be used in more than one paper. Obviously, you will need your topics to be different enough to meet the requirements of the different instructors' assignments, but do not make your papers so different that you are unable to sleep because of the workload you have set for yourself. The following Venn diagram (Figure 2) shows some of the variables I take into consideration when choosing a topic for a paper.

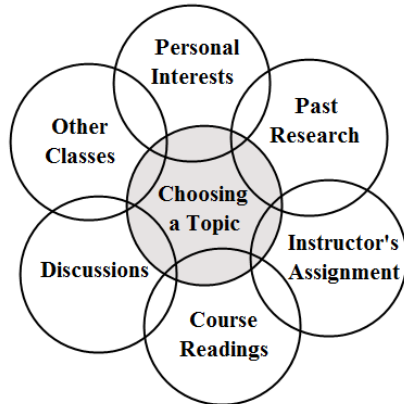


Figure 2: Variables to consider when choosing a topic

When I first became a graduate student I felt a bit intimidated by all that was required of me. I was sure that everyone else knew what they were doing, and that they were much more prepared than I was. I realized through candid conversations that many of us were in the same boat. Now, I seek out colleagues whom I trust to help me through difficult projects.

The first place to ask for assistance is from your fellow classmates since they might be easily able to help you clarify simple questions about an assignment or unstated expectation of a professor. It is also acceptable to ask instructors to explain the assignments in more detail and to give some more guidelines. In general, most faculty members are very accommodating; however, some instructors think this kind of pestering shows a lack of self direction and may penalize you with a lower grade. In general, I would not worry about this too much since the faculty in our Humanities Department are outstanding. However, personality conflicts and general differences of opinion could cause friction if not accommodated.

Researching

Once you have picked a general topic, it is time to start the research process. Usually you won't be starting from scratch at the library, but, instead you will have a few authors and their articles which you have discussed in class. One excellent way to begin finding great sources is by consulting the references that these authors used to write their pieces. It is not uncommon for you to hit upon several items that everyone seems to read and quote. This is an ideal place to begin your research. Another good way to begin is to read a book that will give you significant background information on your topic. This could be a summary

text from class or a comic book which depicts everything you need to know about Michel Foucault.

It is not very difficult to find an article if you have the proper citation from the work cited list of an article or book. After checking the online catalogue, either go to the stacks and pull out the appropriate journal, or search in the online databases for title, author, and topic. If you are having difficulty locating a particular citation, don't hesitate to ask a librarian for help. You can either visit the library reference desk in person (on the second floor of the JRVP Library), or you can have virtual consultation through an online chat program or by email (these links are found on the libraries main page under "Ask a Librarian").

The librarians are excellent resources; they are happy to help you find good sources. The first semester I was here at Tech, I asked one of the librarians to sit down with me to show me how to maneuver the library's online databases. (For more information on how to use the library, please consult Diane Koskela's "A Quick Start Guide to the J.R. Van Pelt Library," located in this supplement.) Another excellent resource is your instructor and other faculty in the department. You can make an appointment to discuss your research project with different professors who will undoubtedly give you a comprehensive reading list. Finally, don't underestimate your fellow classmates. Many graduate students have shelves filled with great books that can augment any paper on any topic.

After you have read a handful of articles on your topic, it is time to start to narrow your subject down to something that can be reasonably covered in the assigned page limit, which is usually between fifteen and twenty-five pages. This is when it is often helpful to generate a guiding research question. However, I find at this phase of a project that it is more useful to craft a title and a loose list of points I would like to cover in my paper. As an Expressivist—an individual who believes thoughtful self expression creates knowledge and continually drafting and revising creates good writing—I am deeply committed to the process of writing; I often only really know what I have been thinking about once I am almost completely finished writing the paper. Donald Murray, Peter Elbow, and Ken Macrorie champion the writing process as a means to discovery. I find this to be a quite practical approach since I am not a linear thinker. It is much easier for me to redraft my thesis in the introductions and my summary remarks in the conclusions when I have finally settled on my desired argument.

Writing

I find that most of the time I am not satisfied with the graduate seminar papers that I turn in because I don't feel I give myself enough time to write them. I often get immersed in the research stage and can't bring myself to stop reading and start writing. In order to combat this tendency, I have come up with several tactics to integrate my reading with my writing.

The easiest way for me to approach a research paper is through journal entries and regular writing. These low-stakes activities make it easy for me to produce quality work without getting blocked up. When I get an assignment, I try to find time to write an informal, stream-of-consciousness response. This freewrite helps shed light on what I want to research and write about; it usually generates a topic or question which I can pursue. Once I have a trail to follow, I begin reading the pertinent articles and writing quick summaries which help me remember all of the key points. I try to flag the quotes that stand out and the paragraphs which are particularly relevant. If I do the above, by the time I have to write the paper (usually a week or two before it is due) I can compose a fairly good piece of work in a short amount of time.

But then there is writer's block which inevitably hits in the last few weeks of the semester when I have so much to do in so little time. Peter Elbow, in *Writing Without Teachers*, suggests a writing regime which I refer to as (45+15) x 4. He encourages students to freewrite for forty-five minutes and then use fifteen minutes to review and summarize everything into a single sentence which will become the writing prompt for the next forty-five minute freewrite. By the end of this four-hour cycle, any writers will have a significant body of work to piece together into a coherent start of a paper. Elbow argues, and I concur, that though this seems like a lot of wasted time and energy for pages that will just get edited out, in fact, you are wasting less time and energy than is expended on anxiety from not producing a single sentence.

Remember, if at any point in the semester you are having trouble with a project, go to the Writing Center. You can make an appointment to work with a fellow graduate student or one of the other tutors. In order to sign up for an appointment, just stop in and ask for some assistance. If you find that you are regularly having trouble with your assignments, or if you need someone to listen to you talk through ideas and help you organize your thoughts, consider setting up a weekly meeting with the same tutor. Being in the Writing Center will give you the opportunity to take part in a literacy community full of people striving to become better communicators. This learning environment will undoubtedly affect your writing and your teaching.

Conclusion

In conclusion, writing graduate seminar papers can be a lot of fun when you are studying something you are really passionate about. With planning, the research and writing of your papers can become relatively streamlined and efficient, so you can write several quality papers under deadline. The benefit of all of this hard work could be a piece of writing that could become an essay that is strong enough to be sent off to a journal for publication. (For more information on how to turn a seminar paper into a publication, please consult Rebecca Frost's "Academic Publishing for Graduate Students: A Brief Overview," located in this supplement.) It is the hope of every graduate student to see his or her byline in the latest issue of a journal in the field. With these writing suggestions and the recommended reading in the Works Cited, you should be able to write paper after paper with minimal strain.

Works Cited

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David Clanaugh



A Measured and Strategic Approach to Technology as a Student and Teacher in MTU's Rhetoric and Technical Communication Graduate Program

Information technology is becoming increasingly important to our effectiveness and success within the Rhetoric and Technical Communication graduate program as students as well as instructors of the sophomore level multi-modal communications course (and additional courses as one's graduate career unfolds). Depending on one's degree of experience with these resources, it is easy to become overwhelmed with all the technology one is encouraged and expected to use during the first year of graduate school. In addition, technology can strain limited financial resources within the context of pursuing a graduate degree in the Humanities, and this is also true for the undergraduate students.

This paper will provide an overview of basic technology infrastructure in the Humanities Department. It will also outline an incremental approach to technology acquisition, utilization, and application that I developed during my first year of graduate school with a heavy reliance on free, open source software. I arrived at MTU with a basic comfort with technology and a fair amount of experience applying it in a non-profit human services setting, yet this background left me feeling “behind the times” and stressed-out in an academic setting. Talking with colleagues, I discovered that I was not alone in this experience.

By providing an overview of technology and options in using these resources, this document will serve as a road map for navigating your way forward with less stress. You can use this document during GTI orientation as you are being introduced to the potential of technology in our program; you can also refer to it on a continuing basis during the year for clarification and next steps in your process. Having this general road map available at the start of the program will help you encounter less stress, integrate technology more simply and effectively into your work, and experience a greater sense of efficacy as a student and teacher.

During orientation, information will come at you bit by bit – and sometimes in big chunks – from a variety of sources. Sometimes this information does not make sense at the time of presentation, or you must simply set it aside

in the midst of all the other tasks and try to make sense of it later. There are also some things you must inevitably discover on your own. This document will also attempt to reduce the number of surprises as well as normalize the inevitability of some surprises you will encounter during the coming year.

Hardware

I strongly recommend acquisition of a laptop computer if you expect to divide work time between home and your campus office. One or two flash drives with at least one gigabyte of storage each are also excellent investments. If you plan to frequently transport your computer, identify the minimum screen size you will need to meet your goals. Although I love my 17-inch screen, lugging back and forth this beast of a laptop can be quite a burden!

Although I am using a PC because of my familiarity with the Windows platform and the lower cost of hardware, I and other students taking this route have experienced more than our share of problems with Windows-based systems. Unstable performance, lost data, and the need to reinstall the operating system, applications, and a BIOS update all consumed precious time and created much stress during Semester One. I would encourage you to consider the extra cost of purchasing a Mac as a worthwhile investment.

MTU Infrastructure

The Humanities Department has an excellent computing lab (Center for Computer-Assisted Language Instruction – CCLI) on the first floor of Walker in Room 113. The CCLI home page is at <http://www.hu.mtu.edu/ccli/>. Dozens of PC and Mac computers, scanners, printers, and related equipment are available with MS Office and Adobe Creative Suite (image editing, pdf creation and editing, desktop publishing, and web design capabilities are included in this suite). Different computers have different open source software applications installed on them, but specific programs can be added to suit your needs. The Lab Director, Assistant Lab Director, and the lab consultants in the white coats can help you with questions in the CCLI. You are allotted 450 pages of printing per semester in the CCLI, after which you will be charged ten cents per page.

Also consider bringing your classes to use the CCLI on occasion for project work days – there is a sign up sheet available for doing this, and this can serve as a segue into teaching Revisions in a “computer intensive” manner after your first two semesters. Kim Puuri in Walker 319A is the go-to person for questions about photocopying as well as the person who can schedule you for multimedia equipment (laptops, digital projectors, speakers, video cameras, recorders, etc). Sue Niemi can also help with these matters, and both staff members are extremely helpful and flexible.

Another good computer consulting resource is fellow grad student Randy Harrison. Also be sure to check out on Friday afternoons the informal Teaching with Instructional Technology sessions affectionately known as TWIT. Your interests and needs will receive serious consideration in the selection of TWIT topics, so don't be shy voicing these.

The JRVP Library recently opened an expanded a "Digital Studio" that has MS Office, Adobe Creative Suite, and audio and video editing software as well as large format color printers. Your student name and MTU ISO password are needed to log on to this equipment. Reference Librarian Hans Kishel can help you with this facility. The home page is <<http://www.lib.mtu.edu/services/DigitalStudio/default.aspx>>. All the reference librarians at JRVP have been great helpers to me, and I heartily encourage you to approach them for assistance.

Walker has wireless capability. You can log in at <<http://www.rovernet.mtu.edu/>> or <<http://www.login.mtu.edu/tools/public/login>> with your user name and MTU ISO password. This is also the password used for WebCT, BanWeb and The Avenue, to name other commonly used web-based resources. This password is initially your M Number, but you can change it during your initial log-on. System Administrator Keith West can help if you have problems with the wireless system or with setting up your email. If you want to log on remotely, directions for doing this are located at <https://help.we.mtu.edu/index.php/Accessing_Programs_and_Files_from_Home#Connecting_to_the_VPN>.

MTU currently uses the web-based Squirrel Mail email system, and you can log in with your user name and password at <<https://huskymail.mtu.edu/>>. It is possible to use an email client to download your email and manage it off of the MTU email server. Comprehensive information about the email system is at <<https://email.mtu.edu/user.cgi>> and information specific to email clients at <<https://email.mtu.edu/docs/public/settings/index.html>>.

Instructional Communication Considerations

In my experience, one of the most important resources for communicating via email is the listserv. When you are admitted to the graduate program you will automatically be subscribed to the HU-grad and other relevant listservs. Most of the faculty also set up listservs for the classes you take. You can set up listservs for the classes you teach by going to <<http://majordomo.mtu.edu/cgi-bin/majordomo>>. "Majordomo" instructions and troubleshooting information are available at <<http://majordomo.mtu.edu/help/majordomo.help.html>>. You can also get the list of email addresses for each listserv by emailing

majordomo@mtu.edu and typing "Who name of listserv" in the body of the message.

A word of caution: email is a powerful tool for communication, but go easy on using it with your students. Until they are "trained" in your email expectations, hold back on expecting them to access vital class information via email. Many students, however, mention they really appreciate email as a tool for following up on classroom discussion and setting the stage for the next steps in their educational experiences.

Software for Communication

During orientation you will hear from many established graduate students that they have set up web pages to communicate for instructional purposes – don't let this press you to drop everything to develop a website. Last year only about a quarter of the new grad students set up web pages by the end of their second semester, and some of us waited until summer for developing this resource. If you aren't savvy with webdesign software like Dreamweaver, iWeb is a simple "drag and drop" web design program available in the CCLI. Typically a TWIT session during the first semester provides an orientation to iWeb. In addition, the free open source web page development program Joomla! is available at <http://www.joomla.org/> if you want to undertake a custom web design project.

What other grad students and I found as a very useful alternative for teaching our classes (and also sharing resources among ourselves) involved making available class documents and supporting materials through our public folders on the Humanities server. What's nice about this is that you can almost immediately make available new or revised materials for your students – and you will be developing materials along the way as you teach those first few sections of Revisions! Sufficient space (two gigabytes) is available in that public folder to upload everything from the class syllabus to examples of podcasts to free downloads of software for creating podcasts. FileZilla is an excellent free file transfer protocol (ftp) software program available at <http://filezilla-project.org/>. Once you have installed FileZilla, you can log in with your user name and Tech ISO password at <ftp://login.hu.mtu.edu>. Then it simply becomes a matter of dragging files from your local folders and dropping them in your public folder in the HU server, including any subfolders that you define.

You can find an example of how the public folder has been organized to facilitate instruction at <http://www.hu.mtu.edu/~daclanau/>. If you want your name on the faculty/staff/student page of the Humanities website to serve as a link to your public folder or web page, ask Randy Harrison to set this up for you. Also look for ways of offering links to that folder from your syllabus and from the course guide that a reference librarian is willing to develop for you.

In terms of browsing the Internet and managing email, I have had good experiences using the free, open source Mozilla Firefox browser and Thunderbird email client (available at <http://www.mozilla.org/>). Many undergraduate students are familiar with these programs, and others appreciate learning about them as alternatives to Microsoft programs.

Software for Instruction

Because the sophomore composition course “Revisions” has an emphasis on multi-modal communication, information technology can play a huge role in your effectiveness as a teacher. The challenge here is how to acquire and utilize the various software programs that can allow you to design and assign projects to your students that work with images and sounds as well as written text. There is no possible way that many of us can become experts in the use of the various programs, and there is a definite danger of becoming distracted and stressed out from efforts to bring too much technology into the classroom too soon.

The good news is that many of our students come in the door with a range of exposure and knowledge about these resources. The flip side is that a surprising number of students at our technological university are not very familiar or comfortable with computers and software applications. I suggest that, early in the semester, you survey your students about their knowledge, skill, and comfort levels with various software programs. Don't hesitate to enlist some of the experts in helping you to demonstrate software, and also think strategically about how to help the technological neophytes to overcome their fears. When you form teams for the various projects, make sure to distribute expertise and skills among the teams. This not only helps each team maximize its success, it also allows students to teach and learn from each other.

In my experience, students savvy with software often aren't as strong as writers and editors while the inverse is often true for students who are less technologically inclined. Returning to open source software as an excellent low-cost and inclusive approach to teaching Revisions in a multi-modal manner, I strongly encourage you to use the OpenOffice suite of programs available at <http://www.openoffice.org/>. Not only is this a stable and flexible set of software applications for developing documents and presentations as well as managing data, the built-in pdf converter in the word processor makes it easy to produce universally accessible PDFs. Training students to bring their completed projects to class presentations as PDF files will go a long way toward reducing software compatibility issues.

In terms of how to structure assignments to give students experiences with comparing and integrating the forms of communication (visual, oral, written, and multimodal), I like to start them out with a simple individual visual

design project about a topic relevant to each student. GIMP is an excellent graphics editing program available for free at <<http://www.gimp.org/>> that can facilitate the manipulation of images to construct rhetorical arguments. These images then can be placed in a word processor such as OpenOffice Writer or MS Word. If students want to try their hands with a desktop publishing interface to pull together images and text, a free program to do this (Scribus) is available at <<http://www.scribus.net/>>.

My second project, conducted by teams of three or four students, involves selecting a topic from the visual design assignment and converting it to an audio argument in the form of a podcast. Many cell phones, digital cameras, and laptop computers can be used to record sounds, and there is a huge selection of stock sounds available through the Internet. Another free open source program (Audacity, available at <<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>>) can be used to layer and edit sounds and then convert these raw materials into MP3 files that can be played on almost any media player.

My students' third project – also conducted in teams of four students – focuses on written communication through researching and analyzing rhetorical arguments about regional issues that are mediated through newspapers and supplemental sources. This project concludes with multimodal group presentations that can use sounds, images, and words. These presentations describe the students' topics and share what they learned about rhetorical processes in media. Prior to this project we have a reading about the dangers of presentation software and ideas for using this tool effectively. Students can use MS PowerPoint or OpenOffice Impress to develop their presentations, and they are also encouraged to consider the merits of a “low-tech” approach that emphasizes speaking skills, overhead slides, and/or other hard copy materials.

In closing, I hope this document helps you formulate some ideas going into your first semester of how you want to teach (and study) using information technology. What I have presented involves one process and set of strategies I developed during year one of grad school. This has been a stressful, although satisfying, process. This document aims to encourage and support your thoughts about goals, approaches, and tools available to you as a teacher and student. By providing an overview of my process and resources, I hope your sense of satisfaction will far surpass your experiences of stress in this area of graduate education.

David B. Karnosky



Teaching with Technology

Inevitably as a graduate student in the Rhetoric and Technical Communication Program you'll likely find yourself teaching at least one section of Revisions along with any of a number of other courses. Teaching can be a stressful experience, especially if you write lesson plans out by hand then spend endless hours in front of a copy machine making overheads of your important points and other class-related materials. But, it doesn't have to be so difficult thanks in large part to today's computer software and hardware which can assist you in several ways, provided money either isn't a problem, or your department has funding to purchase the materials and provide you access to them.

On the software side of things, Microsoft has a suite of programs known as Office which includes Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Word, as its name suggests, is a word processor, Excel a spreadsheet, and PowerPoint a presentation package. Apple also created a suite of software known as iLife. Programs in iLife include such pieces as iPhoto, iMovie and Garage Band. The software mogul Adobe has come up with some great programs as well: Photoshop, Indesign, and others. There are open-source programs that do some of the same things the Microsoft and Adobe software can, but sometimes there's no substitute for the original.

When it comes to hardware for assisting educators, desktop computers, laptop computers, projectors and scanners are the most useful tools. Instructors prefer laptops for their computers, as they are typically both portable and powerful. The Humanities Department has a host of hardware from laptops to projectors to cameras. All come in handy when preparing and presenting new material to or for students. What you will find in the rest of this chapter are explanations of these technologies, including their costs, and some ways to implement them, mainly for teaching purposes.

The software giant Microsoft has, over several years, developed its Office suite to better suit students and teachers alike. While Microsoft offers several differing versions of Office at various prices, educators can buy the Student version for around \$135, and it will contain Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook, all the really necessary programs for everyday use.

Word, the Office suite's word processor, though not as effective as Works used to be, is powerful enough to get the job done. It comes with several templates (i.e. resumes, etc.) built in to work from, and creating new ones for yourself isn't difficult. Word can be used to create everything from well organized, easy-to-follow lesson plans to sample writing pieces. With a projector, Word can be blown up onto a screen, giving the instructor the opportunity to model various composition techniques for the whole class before setting them to a task, such as improving or strengthening a paragraph through various editing techniques they've been shown.

Excel, the spreadsheet software, can be used in a number of classroom settings. In a composition class, Excel can be used to create tables, which are nice when brainstorming, as they keep ideas organized for students as they try to decide what to write. Similarly, in a math classroom Excel can be used to create tables that lead to graphs which can be used to model a situation, giving students a visual representation to work from.

PowerPoint slideshows are an interactive way to display key concepts for both students and instructors. The slides can be custom designed to include text, pictures, audio and even video. Also, they can be printed in groups of four to eight per page, which make great handouts to give students prior to a presentation, enhancing the audience's ability to follow the lecture by helping to structure students' note-taking. Beyond teaching presentations, PowerPoint is useful to graduate students as a tool for designing posters, which can be used as an alternative assignment. Graduate students can use poster making to promote their own research.

Apple has created a suite that works well for alternative assignments in iLife. As with most Apple hardware and software, it's only available from Apple stores, but it will only cost you \$79, provided you have an Apple computer to run it on. It has also been made available with new Apple computers as part of the initial software install package.

Using iPhoto allows Apple users the ability to manage their photos in a fashion similar to Adobe's Photoshop, which will be explained in greater detail below. iPhoto has a typical photo-editing capability along with the ability to create photo books, cards, slideshows and even calendars. This opens up options for creating projects beyond the typical adding-of-pictures-to-a-paper. It also eases the process of posting pictures on the web.

iMovie can be used by instructors or students to create videos for presentation. It stores many types of video files in one place, easing the process of creating a movie through the drag-and-drop method. Creating a movie about a particular concept might be an alternative way for a student to present an assignment if he/she struggles with writing about the concept. As with iPhoto,

users can post their newly created videos straight to the Internet. In fact, iMovie is so popular that major movie editors use it to manage theatrical releases.

If photos and videos aren't enough options for students, Garage Band gives them the option of creating/editing audio files. Billed as the perfect tool for unknown "garage bands" to prepare professional-sounding demo CDs, it allows users to either record new material or edit previously-recorded work. The new files can then be converted into a format that iTunes can play, helping expand the audience for the file, as it can be played in iPods and other media devices, or burned into CDs to create hard copies. The audio track can also be added to a PowerPoint presentation, further engaging the audience.

Adobe's programs work in connection with Microsoft Office. Photoshop, a picture-editor, runs from \$75 to \$250 depending on the version. However, many people don't realize that Photoshop Elements (a lesser version of the parent program) has many of the editing features everyday users need for a lower cost.

Photoshop is a powerful photo-editor in which its users can modify images from digital cameras or scanners to use in their slideshow. Users can also edit photos found via the web as necessary. As mentioned above, Elements is a dressed-down version of Photoshop but gives users most of the popular editing options for a fraction of the price.

Indesign, the other useful but expensive (\$680) Adobe software, can be used for projects where students are asked to create newsletters or newspaper articles. Both give students opportunities to enhance a multi-modal project they are working on. Indesign has a very user-friendly layout, allowing users to set up their page designs as they wish to see them printed before actually creating the hard copy. The MTU *Lode* (our university paper) uses Indesign to lay out the paper's various sections every week.

When it comes to hardware, there are several pieces that connected together become useful tools for instruction. Laptops are most effective for instructors since they are not only portable, but they do many of the same things desktops can, including connecting to scanners, digital cameras and projectors. They are becoming more cost-efficient as well. A respectable laptop can be purchased for as little as \$400. Of course, a high-end model with all the bells and whistles will run in the neighborhood of \$3,000.

Projectors are necessary to enlarge the computer screen for full classroom use. Several companies now create projectors, from Casio to Toshiba, and competition helps to force the basic cost down. Running anywhere from \$600 to \$1400, projectors are becoming more reasonable and can connect to most laptops via a video cable.

Other popular hardware for instructors and students alike are scanners and digital cameras. Scanners do just as their name suggests; they are used for

scanning, whether it be old photos, slides or even text (in some cases). Digital cameras are similar to regular film cameras, except that they take a digitized photo and store it on a memory card. This photo can then be downloaded to a computer and ready for manipulation using either Photoshop or iPhoto.

The Humanities Department has a nice collection of hardware available for graduate students who don't normally have access to such equipment. By checking with Kimberly Puuri, secretary, GTAs can request laptops (both PC and Mac), projectors, camcorders, cameras and other various pieces. For a complete listing of what's available, you are encouraged to visit

<http://www.hu.mtu.edu/hu_dept/facilities/equipment.html> When requesting equipment, it is suggested to do so 48 hours in advance. Ms. Puuri and graduate student Randy Harrison are working on a way to make this available via the web.

Graduate students in Humanities have many hardware and software options that can help them in their role of instructor, and the department can supply nearly everything that a GTA needs as she or he begins teaching Revisions while in graduate school. From laptop computers and projectors to Microsoft Office and Apple iLife, all these tools can be used by GTAs. Used effectively, these tools can enhance the instructor's ability to present the material and help students to learn. By opening up options beyond the typical "write a 10-page paper on this concept" assignment, these tools also give students in a GTAs classroom the opportunity to create a movie clip, a poster or even a newsletter rather than just another written paper. The trick for GTAs will be how to assess such projects as they now do a piece of writing.

Kevin Hodur



When to Follow Directions, When to Look Out for Yourself: Forming Committees for a Humanities Doctoral Degree

Following instruction and completing tasks in order is important. Just consider building a Lego kit, performing Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, or giving a friend directions to a party: none will come out right if done in the wrong order. And it is not only a trivial concern: if you were to complete your dissertation first, then your comprehensives, then your coursework, I would both congratulate you on your impending completion of your degree while working on the streamheads and the professional seminar course, and I would also seriously question the value of the degree you attained. Done out of order, you simply cannot get the same amount out of the degree. The rules are there for a reason.

But there are times where you must bend the rules a bit to do things correctly. One of the major benefits of your coursework is to get yourself acquainted with not only the possibilities for direction of study, but also the department's faculty and get to know their research interests. As you will be taking the final steps to enter Kenneth Burke's metaphorical parlour, it is vital to find faculty members who not only share your interests, but also with whom you can effectively work. Almost no one enters this stage of their academic career spurning the chance to have a mentor, and the classroom apparatus provides the opportunity to make discoveries of compatibility. Start this as early as possible.

Speaking of early starts, it has been the department's policy to begin setting up a comprehensive exam committee as quickly as possible upon entering the program. According to the 2007-2008 *RTC Graduate Handbook*, "[c]omprehensive committees should be formed as soon as possible after entering the RTC Program and generally no later than the end of the second semester" (3.13). Such a policy would dictate that forming a committee at the earliest possible time would be beneficial. This is a document assembled by seasoned academics, and it is their knowledge we look to in improving our own scholarly work and contributions to academia as a whole. Yet, considering the time it takes to really become acquainted with all of the faculty, and the chance to work with them in a classroom environment, such a policy seems inadequate to the needs of graduate students in the RTC program. Without the opportunity to

meet the faculty and consider individual interests, setting up a comprehensive exam committee at this point not only becomes difficult, but also borderline dangerous. Future interests might be different from present, and getting to know faculty, and working with them to assess such a relationship, is essential. This becomes one of those moments where bending the stated requirements becomes beneficial to everyone.

Gregory Semenza, amongst his other advice for doctoral students, has some quite prescient information for how to form committees, and when taking such action is appropriate. In *Graduate Study for the 21st Century*, Semenza gives some rather specific advice regarding committees and proper committee management. While his advice specifically concerns dissertation committees, the advice does apply to comprehensive exam committees, as that will be the predecessor to the dissertation committee. Semenza's advice for dealing with a major advisor with whom you are having conflict is quite helpful.

As a professor and director of graduate studies, who listens regularly to students and their advisors, I can tell you that such conflicts are extremely common. I can also tell you that they usually are easily resolvable if both parties are willing to communicate openly about the cause of the conflict. Should a problem ever arise, try first sitting down with your advisor in order to address the matter head-on. (175-76)

Semenza is telling us what we should do if we are having a problem, indirectly advocating this position of holding off committee formation. His advice should, obviously, hold for anyone dealing with any kind of interpersonal strife. Communication of the direct sort, within a professional setting, is the best way to deal with these situations. The advice Semenza is giving has a great deal more to do with the dissertation; the comprehensives committee can be a bit more fluid, and you have a much greater capacity to change the make-up of your committee earlier on. The point is that if you choose your committee too early you have a higher likelihood of choosing incorrectly, and you will be left with the sit down Semenza recommends.

If you do need to go through this type of meeting, remember to be honest. If you have chosen incorrectly, and you know your studies with a particular professor will not be the correct thing for your future academic work, then you may simply sit down and talk with that faculty member. Remember that this professor has interests in this field, so be diplomatic but firm in pointing out that for the time being, the direction of your studies has changed. It is important that you look out for your interests at this time, as even though there are individuals

willing to represent you, you are not in a position where you are known well enough for it to be easy for anyone else to help you.

It is also important to note that Semenza's general advice is for the student who is singularly focused. As his perspective is from the literature field, we should consider what the other possibilities are for a department such as the Humanities department at Michigan Tech. Our interdisciplinarity offers up the possibility for shifting interests and a wide and rich talent pool from whom knowledge and perspective flows. Shifts in interest will not be uncommon, though like any collection of individuals, some graduate students will come in with a clearer sense of purpose than others.

In either case, there is no reason to panic. In fact, this highlights the importance of not making an immediate claim on committee members and bending that rule ever so slightly. While there is no reason to linger unnecessarily over forming a committee if you know your direction, waiting that little bit of extra time, if even just to witness the diversity of the department, can prove quite helpful. Perhaps a good strategy, in addition to the other activities such as paper editing and language work you attempt over the summer, is to make individual contact with faculty members with whom you might like to work. This would mean that the fall or spring semester of your second year would be the best time to officially form your committee, since you can then make an informed choice. After all, it would be unfortunate to come across an individual with whom you would like to work after your committee is already set, especially as changing a committee is not necessarily the easiest thing to do.

The first, and perhaps most obvious, complication in changing the composition of a committee is that you will not wish to harm future possibilities. It should go without saying that just because you've changed your mind once does not mean that you won't change your mind again in the future. And beyond that, just because your immediate doctoral research may not involve this particular faculty member, it does not mean that your future life as an academic will not involve collaboration. You must strike a careful balance in this "divorce" process.

The second complication has more to do with staying on track academically. With the level of interdisciplinarity in our department, there is much in which the graduate student may become interested, and exploring each reading and argument that comes up can ultimately prove a distraction, causing the student to miss his or her greatest interest. It may be that, rather late in the game, you are working much more closely with someone who is not initially in your comps committee. Therefore, it might be best to, as Semenza suggests, sit down with everyone with complete honesty, and see what can be worked out. After all, your comprehensive exams have the major advantage of exposing you

to the major works in your field, something that will be of great assistance once comps are over and you are beginning the long road to the dissertation.

Once you have completed your comprehensive exams, and assuming all goes as planned, your committee will dissolve. While some students see this as an annoyance, it can also be opportunity for students to shuffle faculty members with whom they would like to work. This should be seen as a positive in particular for the student who, regardless of deadline, feels he or she has had to choose far too quickly the composition of the comprehensives committee. Given the rotation of faculty in teaching graduate courses, it makes perfect sense that graduate students could reach the end of course work and not have the opportunity to work more closely with several faculty members in their chosen interest. According to the timeline in Cindy Moore and Hildy Miller's *A Guide to Professional Development*, much of the comprehensives work begins immediately, with an aim towards finishing the exams between years three and four (96). They note, though, that this work begins with a portfolio requirement immediately upon entering the program, alongside thinking about your research interests, surveying journals, and considering advisors. Such a portfolio might ultimately prove to be your best tool, allowing some self-reflection and the opportunity to be the best self advocate you can be.

You are here ultimately for your dissertation, and if you consider your coursework to be an opportunity to explore and acquaint yourself with respected and accomplished academics, you will settle in well with a committee. Know that mistakes will sometimes be made along the way, and know that you will not be the same person when you finish this program as when you started. Many have claimed that you learn the most outside of school as an undergraduate, and perhaps then it is appropriate to say that you learn more in the offices of faculty (and at the front of the classroom) than you do in any seminar room. Handling yourself and your work with dignity, reflection, and care will gain the respect of any committee members you select. Or deselect.

Note: Since the writing of the essay, the policy in the 2008-2009 Graduate Handbook regarding setting up committees has been amended to read:

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James A. Rudkin



Service in the Name of Humanities

Many opportunities are available for service work throughout your graduate career at Michigan Technological University. Service work is work that is unpaid and on a volunteer basis. This differs from administrative positions that are also available because administrative positions take the place of all or part of the three course teaching assignments for funded graduate students. Volunteer positions may require time outside of your normal work schedule; however, they benefit not only the department and your fellow graduate students, but also you. Through these positions, you will have the opportunity to help guide the department, inform fellow Humanities graduate students, make decisions affecting all graduate students university wide, as well as help guide the University itself.

These positions also improve your Curriculum Vitae (CV). Your active participation in service positions shows potential employers that you are willing to provide service outside of the paid position. Furthermore, it demonstrates experience within the context of service, which can provide an advantage over other applicants. However, always remember service never takes the place of quality scholarship and an excellent teaching record. Only accept service positions that will not interfere with your academic pursuits. Select service assignments that fit with your schedule as well as your personality. Do not overburden yourself during your first year, as the time required to acclimate yourself into the department as well as the graduate lifestyle at Michigan Tech is very important. Take the time you need to acquaint yourself with the department and the University. After you become comfortable, look for the service position or positions that are right for you. Service opportunities at Michigan Tech include elected and non-elected positions within the Humanities Department as well as positions on University-wide committees.

Elected Positions in Humanities

There are six elected graduate service positions available in the Humanities Department. These positions are: HU-Grad Coordinator, MOOT Coordinator, Graduate Student Council Representative (Ph.D.), Graduate Student Council Representative (Masters), RTC Steering Committee (Ph.D.), and RTC Steering

Committee (Masters). Each service position comes with its own agenda, responsibilities and meeting requirements. Elections for these positions are held during the last weeks of the Spring semester, and each position has a term length of one year. However, you may be nominated and run for the same position during consecutive years.

The current HU-Grad Coordinator calls for nominations of individuals to serve in the upcoming academic year. At this point, you may nominate yourself or a fellow Humanities graduate student. After the HU-Grad Coordinator verifies all nominees are willing to serve, she or he creates a ballot and makes it available to all graduate students in the department. Traditionally, at this time, the current MOOT Coordinator arranges a MOOT for the purpose of a candidate "Meet-and-Greet," where the Humanities graduate students can come and discuss the upcoming election. MOOT is the weekly/bi-weekly Humanities graduate student meeting for professional and academic development. The voting takes place over the next few days, with a predetermined date and time limit. Once voting is completed, the current HU-Grad Coordinator counts the votes and announces the winners. The newly elected members begin their term of service the following Fall semester, with the exception of the Graduate Student Council Representatives, who begin their terms with the Summer semester.

HU-Grad Coordinator

All graduate students in the Humanities Department are considered members of HU-Grad. HU-Grad is the forum for disseminating important information to the Humanities graduate student body. The HU-Grad Coordinator provides a venue, such as HU-Grad meetings and the hugrad-l listserv, for the discussion of such information.

HU-Grad holds discussions regarding RTC Program policies, University policies, and any other concerns the graduate student body may have. The HU-Grad Coordinator can then draft a letter voicing these concerns and address it to the appropriate departmental authority such as the Department Chair or Graduate Director. The HU-Grad Coordinator can also call for a meeting and invite those members of the department who can best explain or affect change regarding those concerns. HU-Grad Coordinator responsibilities also include the organization of yearly elections for the departmental service positions and the scheduling, with the assistance of the MOOT Coordinator, of a MOOT to provide a candidate "meet-and-greet." The position of HU-Grad Coordinator lasts from the beginning of the Fall semester after elections until the beginning of the following Fall semester. Although not much happens during the Summer semester, if the current HU-Grad Coordinator will not be available, it is possible

to arrange to relinquish the position earlier to the incoming HU-Grad Coordinator.

Through the position of HU-Grad Coordinator, you will not only serve your fellow graduate students, but you will also hone your organizational skills. This position allows you to meet and work with faculty and staff, which is an opportunity you may not otherwise enjoy. This also shows your willingness to work in academic service situations, which is an added benefit when applying for academic positions.

RTC Steering Committee (PhD and Masters Student Representatives)

The RTC Steering Committee is a departmental committee comprised of faculty and two graduate student representatives. The committee is responsible for the discussion, evaluation and implementation of policies and procedures pertinent to RTC program. They are also responsible for the evaluation and selection of potential graduate student candidates admitted into the program. Traditionally, there is one PhD and one Masters student representing HU-Grad. In the event that there is not a PhD or Masters student willing to serve on the committee, both positions may be filled by two members of the same graduate level.

As the student representative to the RTC Steering Committee, you will be afforded the chance to get to know and work closely with faculty members. You will also gain insight into how decisions affecting the program come into being. You will also gain valuable academic committee experience, helping you in your own professional development.

MOOT Coordinator

MOOT is usually an informal lunchtime meeting where many topics are discussed including: conference presentations, conference proposals, professional development, and survival within the graduate community. The MOOT Coordinator is responsible for setting up discussion forums relevant to the development of the Humanities graduate student body. The MOOT Coordinator is also responsible for bringing experienced graduate students, as well as faculty members, to help facilitate the discussion. Graduate students also use MOOT as a forum for the informal airing of program and departmental concerns faced by the graduate student body, and it is also a way of developing and maintaining a sense of community among the students. The MOOT Coordinator usually schedules weekly or bi-weekly meetings as needs arise. The incoming MOOT Coordinator takes over at the beginning of the following Fall semester.

As MOOT Coordinator, you develop your organizational skills. The position provides you with yet another opportunity to enhance your personal

and professional development. This demonstrates to potential employers your willingness to volunteer your time and energy in the service of others.

Graduate Student Council (GSC) (PhD and Masters Representatives)

Graduate Student Council (GSC) promotes academic and professional development for the graduate student community. It also acts as an advocate for graduate students within the MTU administration. GSC is also an information clearinghouse for University policy changes, which may affect graduate students. Every department in the University has representation in GSC, based on the number of graduate students enrolled within the department. Humanities currently has two graduate student representatives. Traditionally, HU-Grad fills these positions with one PhD and one Master's student. Just as with the RTC Steering Committee, if there are insufficient volunteers, the representatives can both come from the same graduate level. The incoming GSC Reps begin attending meetings at the last scheduled GSC meeting of the Spring semester. They are then required to attend Summer session meetings (monthly) and throughout the next academic year (bi-weekly). Meeting attendance is important because GSC Travel Grant eligibility is established by departmental representation. In other words, if our GSC Reps do not attend scheduled meetings, Humanities graduate students, as a whole, will not qualify to apply for travel money offered by GSC to attend conferences for the semester following the attendance problem.

The Humanities GSC Representatives are responsible for disseminating the information from the GSC meetings to the rest of HU-Grad, as well as bringing the concerns of the Humanities students to GSC. They vote on current issues facing the graduate student community. Every representative is also required to serve on one of the many committees within the Graduate Student Council. These committees include Academics, Social, Lecture, Public Relations, Orientation, Student Issues and Elections. After serving a one-year term, the representatives may run for a position on the GSC Executive Board. The Executive Board is comprised of the GSC President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, as well as the chairs of each of the committees. These positions do not count toward the number of departmental representatives, except for the Chair of Public Relations, meaning that Humanities would get an additional representative for each Humanities student on the Executive Board. The Executive Board members receive a small amount of monetary compensation at the end of the year in the form of an honorarium for their services. The GSC President is the only member to receive full tuition and a stipend through the Graduate School.

GSC Representation affords you the opportunity to see first hand how the University Administration interacts with the graduate community. The University offers many other opportunities for service through the Graduate Student Council. You also meet and interact with graduate students from across campus. This is beneficial for demonstrating your ability and willingness to work with diverse populations within the context of academia. Graduate Student Council is also regarded as a leadership position. Both of these are beneficial when entering the job market.

Alternate Service Opportunities

As a member of the HU-Grad community, there are other opportunities for service available to you. These opportunities are within the Humanities Department itself, as well as across the University in general. Committees are always forming for one reason or another and most welcome graduate student representation.

Serving on most departmental committees is by invitation or appointment. If you are interested, contact the Director of Graduate Studies or the Department Chair to express your willingness and desire to serve. This does not guarantee a position, but it shows your commitment to the department. A committee chair may also invite graduate students to sit on the committee, so it is to your benefit to get to know the faculty if you are looking for service opportunities. Remember, not all committees involve the seriousness of dictating policy; some are created to plan parties, so let your interests be known, whatever they might be.

If your interests are more toward serving on University-wide committees, contact your GSC representatives. GSC is constantly being asked to provide graduate student representatives for a variety of committees, and GSC would gladly pass on the name of non-representatives to fill these positions. You do not have to volunteer for every committee created, but you can choose to serve on those that interest you. Through contact with your GSC representative, your opportunities to serve will greatly increase.

As stated before, only volunteer when you are comfortable and ready to serve. Your scholarship and academics are the most important factors in your professional development. However, getting out from behind the books and participating within the graduate and academic community can be rewarding for you and the rest of the department. Participation also provides you different venues for sociability, which is sometimes forgotten during the pursuit of a graduate education.

Russell Johnson



Side by Side: Opportunities for Graduate Students to Participate in Undergraduate Student Organizations

When students new to the MTU Humanities Department arrive on campus, we can be singularly focused on the graduate student experience. Our relationship with undergraduate life is through the undergraduates we instruct and typically is of a formal nature. While there is nothing wrong with keeping this distance, it can deny both the graduate students and undergraduate students the opportunity to share a knowledge base. This relates a good deal to my own personal experience. Having completed my undergraduate degree here at MTU, I have begun to appreciate my unique experience of working with groups that are traditionally considered undergraduate student organizations.

There are multiple reasons why someone could decide to join a student organization of this type. The potential benefit to one's vita seems obvious, but hopefully there are other reasons to join any such activity that takes up a graduate student's valuable time. Working in undergraduate student organizations, while fun, does not have the prestigious sway of working in service institutions such as departmental or university steering and hiring committees. So why should you join them if they lack the prestige? Hopefully the main reason for you will be a desire for the furthering of the organization's agenda as well as the opportunity for social gathering.

One of the hinderances derives from the fact that you, as a new graduate student, have simply not been introduced to these organizations. Even if you are aware of them, you likely do not know how to join or what would be entailed in being a member of these organizations. I've communicated with a few separate group leaders about their organizations, and all of them expressed a strong desire for further graduate student participation within their organizations. I would also encourage all who are interested to peruse MTU's database of student organizations, which can be found at <http://www.sa.mtu.edu/stulife/stuorg/>.

Obviously, not every student organization appeals to a graduate student within a Humanities department. Likely the appeal of MTU's Society of Mechanical Engineers may be lost on you. While these organizations rightfully mean a great deal to our undergrads, their research simply does not synchronize

with our own. However, with a composition focus to our studies, various organizations with a strong writing focus may appeal to Humanities graduate students.

One of the most obvious choices would be the Michigan Tech *Lode*. Many students coming in with journalism experience would find potential for regular writing. Unlike most other student organizations, *Lode* writers receive payment for their work; while the pay is meager, it can help justify the expenditure of time. Also, unlike most organizations, there is no central meeting time for any individual writing team. The organization is divided amongst the various writing duties. If a student is interested in writing for the *Lode's* sports sections, one would need to attend the meeting for that section as there is no larger general staff meeting. These meetings occur at separate dates and times from semester to semester. The *Lode* has four main sections: News, Editorial, Sports, and Pulse (the vitality section.) Other potential roles are for photographers and copy editors. Those interested in writing should visit the *Lode's* website at <<http://www.mtulode.com>> for contact information regarding specific section editors.

While the *Lode* may represent the more traditional outlet for written work, other groups have different potential goals. *The Daily Bull* specifically centers on more comedic free writing. The writing style could be compared in a similar fashion to the parody styling of *The Onion*, a nationally published parody paper. Typically stories in both publications are written in journalistic style, but for the purpose of humor and typically covering fictitious events. Another student paper is *The Technobabe Times* (TBT). They describe their organization as "a monthly publication, as well as an active group in the community, dedicated to the empowerment of women in all aspects of technology and culture. We are also interested in promoting diversity on campus - gender and otherwise." Casey Rudkin, a Humanities graduate student who has been heavily involved with the reformation of the paper, describes the paper as,

The feminist newspaper (media) on campus. It is a place where people interested in feminism can meet and discuss campus issues. Lately, and I think this is a good thing, tbt has been branching out a bit into diversity issues.

It may be wrong to make overall judgments, but many students in our department have strong opinions regarding gender issues on campus and off.

Another organization dealing with social change is MTU's ACLU chapter. Formed only this year (2008), its work is to bring the ACLU's goals to Houghton. Chris Anderson, a co-chair of the organization says,

The role of the ACLU-MI Student Chapter is to bring awareness to constitutional realities. This includes understanding what the constitution was when it was written as well as how it has been violated to a point where it is almost void...as long as we continue to stand on the sidelines as it occurs.

While many individuals may have interest in the ACLU's national organization, it is the small grassroots divisions of it that really make it work. Anderson is fairly passionate about the role graduate students can contribute to MTU's ACLU chapter. For her

Democracy is not a spectator sport. In terms of going out into the world to the workforce, as graduate students, the type of work will be influential and, I believe, civic duties increase. It obviously is not mandatory, but in terms of influence, considerations need to be taken into account.

While maybe not using the term, Anderson really conveys a sense of the importance of praxis, practicing what we preach.

Another potential area would be for those interested in media studies. WMTU has a great deal of potential involvement opportunities, across a variety of roles. Its official description is

Established to provide MTU and the community with an alternative to ordinary commercial radio programming; provide a source of educational programming; provide students with an opportunity to participate in the operation of a radio station.

General Manager Dirk Kahl feels the benefits of graduate student involvement as "experience and knowledge of how things work or have worked in the past are valuable to every organization, not to mention an extra person to help out is always welcome graduate or not." If you are interested in being a DJ, a meeting is held at the beginning of every semester during the first week of class. The commitment for a DJ is to host two or three hour shows. For those more committed, you can join WMTU's general staff. Meetings are held every week on Wednesdays at 6pm. There are various positions that can go with various potential interests. For those interested in the technical side of the station, you can assist with the computer system or engineering. Other departments such as programming allow you to delve through WMTU's amazing library and review music.

Other organizations, such as Michigan Tech's Filmboard, provide not only an opportunity to join an organization, but benefit the student body as well. If you do not have time to participate in their behind-the-scenes work, you can at

least patronize their business for its discount movie showings every weekend in Fisher 135. Many organizations are in a similar vein; they have a strong contingent working behind the scenes to provide a service to you the student, graduate or undergraduate. Simply using these services greatly assists these organizations. This can be as simple as reading the *Lode* or listening to WMTU in the previous examples. Many of these organizations are continuously fighting for funding from the Undergraduate Student Government (USG), and demonstrating their overall effect on campus can result in more support.

This leads to the question of how graduate student participation causes changes in funding for student organizations. While this is not necessary knowledge for you, I feel it should be addressed. Things become tricky when an organization wants to receive funding from both USG and Graduate Student Council (GSC). If you do decide to join one of these student organizations you may potentially cause funding conflict (or opportunities) for these student organizations. The main difference between funding from the two organizations is that USG allocates funding all year long. GSC's funding is more widely distributed to activities such as travel grants and the like, but they will also fund individual events or organizations if requested and approved through a GSC vote. Section VII cii 3a of GSC's bylaws reads:

Priority for discretionary funding will be given to newly formed organizations that lack adequate start up funds, events that are open to all graduate students and organizations that have graduate student participation. Other organizations/events are eligible for discretionary funds at the discretion of the Council.

If you require further information about GSC's bylaws or constitution please visit <<http://gsc.students.mtu.edu/publications.html>>.

So, an organization can receive funding from both USG and GSC, but as Shazoo Rizvi, USG's current president indicated,

During the budget hearings, USG often asks 'What is your ratio of graduates to undergraduates?' Organizations (sic) such as the Indian Student Assoc, a new organization called Global City, have mostly graduates and were given less funding.

Nearly all of the student organization leaders I talked with were not informed on GSC's policy for distributing its funding. This area is tricky, but new graduate students to organizations should understand this policy since their inclusion significantly changes the rules that should be followed.

One element that should really be considered is the social benefit these organizations provide you. It's not tangible, but you will be able to meet passionate young individuals who can help you understand the entire MTU experience. If you are new in town, volunteering can keep things in perspective and help you adjust to your time here.

So why would an "undergraduate student organization" want you, a graduate student, helping with their organization? Mark Cruth, the president of Michigan Tech's Filmboard, summarizes it well: "graduate students would be able to contribute their knowledge from their experiences with student groups during their undergraduate career." This seems to echo every other leader I talked to. As a graduate student you can act as a mentor to our undergraduate population, not necessarily the parent type role an advisor performs, but as big brothers and sisters to them.

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Rebecca Frost



Academic Publishing for Graduate Students: A Brief Overview

Publishing is a very important part of a graduate student's life. While Internet publication is growing increasingly popular, print publication is still the mainstay of scholarly communication (Germano 10). In a perfect world, all job candidates would enter the market with two recently accepted, peer-reviewed articles, and all dissertations would be easily transformed into the published book needed for tenure (Semenza 202). Still, don't feel pressured to publish prematurely. The majority of tips given here are geared toward book publishing. However, much of this information can also be useful when sending an article to a journal for publication. Always remember to consult a journal's "For Contributors" page, as well as to look into a number of journals to ascertain which is best for your piece. Also, editors will almost always request revisions on a journal piece, thereby ensuring that they publish the best work possible (Semenza 212). For more information on journal publishing, I recommend Gregory Semenza's chapter on publishing.

The Manuscript

Your manuscript is not the place to start saving trees. It should be printed as a double-spaced document with adequate margins, on one side of the paper only, in readable 12 point font (Germano 33). When you have a specific publisher in mind, check the website's submissions page to see if they have any special requirements for unsolicited manuscripts. When printing, make sure that every page is legible – this is the time to break out the new ink cartridge.

Although the subject matter of your book might be very specific and require complex language, remember that most people don't want to pause every few minutes to look something up in the dictionary or Google an obscure reference. Write as clearly as you can within the confines of your subject, but don't go so far as to undermine the complexity of your work. You want to find a balance between ease of reading and intricacy of the subject (Germano 31). Remember that many editors have a fifty page rule: if they are not taken in by the first fifty pages of the manuscript, or if they have encountered a submission so dense as to put them to sleep by then, the manuscript will be discarded (Germano 37).

The title of your manuscript is equally as important as its contents. Having a broad, sweeping main title and only revealing the specifics in a subtitle should be avoided, as should buzz words and other tired vocabulary. Your title should be descriptive, not cute, and the literary quotations should be saved for articles in specialized journals. Think in broader terms for a book title, and be sure to say it aloud. If you find yourself having to explain the brilliance of your title to everyone you meet, choose a different title (Germano 39-41).

It is generally assumed that your first book manuscript will grow out of your dissertation, but do not make the assumption that your dissertation is ready for publishing “as is.” Your defense should help you see the revisions that should be made before you submit it to a publisher. It is also fairly common to publish single chapters as journal articles, but keep in mind: most presses make it a practice not to publish books when more than twenty-five percent of the work has already been published (Semenza 218).

Choosing a Publishing House

When deciding where to send your manuscript, you should weigh both the quality of the publishing house and the chance that your work will be accepted (Germano 43). A larger house will have more resources, but a smaller one will have more time to devote to you and your work. However, the other side of the coin is that a smaller publishing house may not be able to do your work justice.

Don’t look at any list of publishers more than a year old. Publishing houses can change hands – and directions – surprisingly quickly. While it may be useful to look at the books on your shelf and get an idea of possible publishers from there, be careful about dates. If the most important work in your field came from a publisher around a decade ago, but you have nothing more recent from that publisher, look for someplace else (Germano 47).

The Letters

Along with your manuscript, you will probably be asked to submit, among other things, a letter of inquiry, a brief project description, and a curriculum vitae. These three documents should be thought of as three parts of a larger whole, always sent together. However, it is unwise to think of combining all three into a single document. These should be three individual documents, so play it safe, especially on your first book (Germano 61).

In general, be sure that your name is on all documents, not just your cover letter (Balkin 8). Print quality, spelling, and grammar all count, so be sure to proofread. These should all be sent in using the letterhead of your current university – publishers expect to see official letterheads. If you have a job title,

use that, too. In the event that you are submitting to a journal before earning your PhD, your title is “PhD Candidate.”

Multiple submissions should be avoided for two main reasons. First, you may receive feedback from one editor that would have been useful before sending your manuscript to another publisher. Second, more than one editor may express interest, which can get you into trouble down the road (Semenza 218). If you say no to one offer and go with another that doesn’t pan out, you can’t go back to the first. Simultaneous inquiry is relatively harmless, but simultaneous submitting is like cheating on a girlfriend who then papers the school with fliers, telling the world about it (Germano 37).

The Cover Letter

Your cover letter should be one page, two at most, simple, and to the point (Semenza 220). It should contain your current address, and your contact information should be valid for up to three months. If you are not ready or willing to react to a positive response in a timely manner, should you receive it, this is not the time to be writing a cover letter. Remember to send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a response (Germano 71).

The Letter of Inquiry

Aside from the manuscript itself, the most important document you send is your letter of inquiry (Germano 60). It should accomplish a trio of goals: first, your letter should identify yourself and give your credentials. Secondly, you should describe your project, including information on its title, its nature, your audience, and the degree of complexity of the work. And third, remember to express interest in publication (Germano 63).

This is not the place to go into pages of detail. Once you’ve stated the key information about your project and yourself, close it (Germano 61). Your editor doesn’t need more than that. There are, however, plenty of signs that can crop up even in a short letter that will get your work sent to the trash.

First, your letter should be addressed to the specific editor who will receive it, but not using his or her first name (Balkin 15-16). A simple call to the publishing house can get you the editor’s name. Remember, too, that the name of the publishing house should match with the name of the editor. If the letter is poorly typed or on plain paper, it will be discarded. If you don’t get to the subject until the last paragraph, or if the purpose of your letter is unclear, start over.

You should never send an entire unsolicited manuscript – again, check the publisher’s website to see whether they request a chapter or just the letters. Your letter should not come with testimonials, nor should you badmouth another

publishing company without mentioning whether they've already rejected your work. Last but not least, your book should be publishable based on its own merits. If your letters argue that your book discusses a famous author whose five hundredth birthday is coming up, and this is the reason the publisher should accept your work, then you need to rethink your submission. Likewise, if you decide that your book would be the perfect way for the publishing house to celebrate its own anniversary, you're a bit too full of yourself and should reconsider making your manuscript strong enough to stand alone (Germano 66-67). You should be submitting your manuscript because of its own merit, and because any publishing house would be delighted to accept it at any time.

The Project Description/Prospectus

This document should be about five pages in length, though again, check the publisher's website to see if they give you a specific word allotment (Semenza 219). Your description of your project should be as clear as possible, avoiding jargon and specialized language. This is not a skeleton outline, so don't feel pressured to summarize chapters. If a sample chapter is requested, pick the one that you think is the strongest and will appeal to the widest audience.

There are hardly any subjects out there that haven't been written on many times before, and your book may even be in direct competition with someone else's recent work (Balkin 10). So why should the editor take a gamble that your book will sell? Explain how your manuscript is different from, or perhaps better than, others on the market (Balkin 12).

Explain who you think your audience will be. Naturally a larger audience will appeal more to an editor than a very limited one. If the topic of your book is too limited and your audience too restricted, your chances of getting published are greatly diminished (Semenza 221).

Overall, your project description should help to answer the following questions: What is this book about? Why did you write it? Who is your intended audience? Why are you qualified to write a book on this subject (Germano 1)? This last is where your CV comes into play.

The Curriculum Vitae

No matter how well-known you think you are, you shouldn't assume that an editor will have heard of you. Always include your CV, as it supports the claim that you are indeed qualified to write on this subject (Germano 61).

Getting a Response

Once you have sent in your manuscript, you should get a reply from an editor, hopefully favorable (Semenza 210). An acquisitions editor is the first person

you'll come into contact with, since acquisitions editors recommend manuscripts for publication. When this happens and you get a favorable response, this is the person with whom you'll want to set up a lasting relationship (Germano 11-12).

However, the response may not be all that quick in coming. Most publishing houses have a weekly or bimonthly meeting at which editors propose manuscripts for publishing, so first it may take a while for someone to get around to your work, and secondly manuscripts are either approved, discarded, or held over (Balkin 38). You are allowed to inquire about the status of your work after four months (Semenza 210). Even if your work is rejected, in most cases the bad news will come with a summary of readers' reports, if not the reports themselves (Semenza 212). These provide valuable feedback for revision and a next attempt at publishing.

Some Final Thoughts

This paper is meant to be a guide in the right direction for an aspiring academic, but it is in no way comprehensive. Aside from speaking to published professors and reading up on publishing houses, if you have the chance to work for a professor who edits a major journal, take it. This will allow you to see the ins and outs of how journals operate and also serve to help you understand why essays get published and why they get rejected (Semenza 233). In the meantime, remember that every published professor has a stack of rejection slips, so receiving one of your own does not mean that you should quit trying.

Appendix A: Checklists for Publishing

The Manuscript

- double spaced, adequate margins, readable 12 pt font, one side of paper only
- no smears from an old print cartridge
- write clearly, using as little jargon as possible
- remember the 50 page rule
- don't hesitate to revise
- check the publisher's "For Contributors" page

The Letters

- be sure your name is on all documents
- use the university letterhead
- use a title – Ph.D. candidate if nothing else
- use your current address
- make sure contact information is valid for at least three months

The Letter of Inquiry

- identify yourself, give your credentials
- describe your project: its nature, its title, your audience, the degree of complexity
- express interest in publication
- address it to the right editor
- keep it short

The Project Description/Prospectus

- check the website to see if you're allowed more than five pages
- don't feel the need to summarize chapters
- why is your book better than any other on the subject?
- what is the book about?
- why did you write it?
- who is your intended audience?
- why are you qualified to write this book?

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Carly Long



Teaching at Tech: Opportunities for Graduate Students in the Rhetoric and Technical Communication Program

So you're in your first or second year in the RTC doctoral program and you're wondering about your teaching options. While Revisions has been a fulfilling teaching experience, you're thinking about other possibilities provided for graduate students in this program. The author of *Graduate Study For the 21st Century: How to Build an Academic Career in the Humanities*, Gregory Semenza, suggests, "a solid teaching portfolio is yet another useful tool not only for distinguishing yourself from the crowd but for competing effectively against job candidates from elite universities" (123). In his line of thinking "no candidate will be hired who has...taught fewer than ten course sections of more than one class" (123). In *A Guide to Professional Development for Graduate Students in English*, Cindy Moore and Hildy Miller, who agree with Semenza on this point, recommend the "versatility [of broadening your teaching repertoire] may also increase your marketability when you search for an academic job" (49). Teaching or assisting with a variety of courses has the potential to distinguish you from your competitors while on the market. It also has the added benefit of providing you with experience that you will appreciate later. Moore and Miller tell us that "extensive teaching experience, if you are planning an academic career, means that you won't have to spend an inordinate amount of time as an assistant professor (or other first positions) learning how to teach" (35).

So, what kinds of teaching opportunities are there through the RTC at Michigan Tech? How might you go about establishing yourself to be in a position to take advantage of these opportunities? In this paper, I intend to provide some answers to these types of questions. First, I will describe the research I've done to investigate these teaching opportunities. Then, I will report the results of this investigation, and finally I will offer some practical advice for graduate students hoping to broaden their teaching repertoire while in the RTC program at Tech.

In order to determine what kinds of teaching opportunities existed at Tech, I pooled my knowledge of the RTC program with several other graduate students who have experienced teaching opportunities beyond Revisions during their graduate careers. I solicited answers to the questions below through email from eleven graduate students.

- (1) What courses have you taught? In what capacity did you teach this course, i.e. were you a sole instructor, teaching assistant, or team-teacher (co-teacher) of the course?
- (2) At what stage in your graduate study did you teach this class?
- (3) How did you learn about this teaching opportunity?
- (4) How did you get this position? What process did you pursue to obtain this position?
- (5) Why were you qualified to teach this course?
- (6) What advice would you give to future RTC graduate students who want to broaden their teaching repertoire?

Four of the eleven graduate students generously provided feedback to these questions through email. I discussed responses to these questions through interviews with an additional three graduate students. After obtaining their responses I found themes within the technical and practical information asked about in these questions.

Technical Information

Questions one through five inquired about the technical aspects of possible teaching opportunities at Tech. The responses to the first and second questions varied widely in terms of which courses were taught, in what capacity, and when. The graduate students I interviewed acted as sole instructor, co-teachers, and teaching assistants. Being a sole instructor for a course means that the person was the instructor of record. They acted as you do as a Revisions instructor: preparing the syllabus and assignments, preparing materials for class discussion, lecture, and/or other activity, providing feedback, and evaluating students. Co-teaching means that the person taught the course with another faculty member. They acted as the faculty member's assistant in both paid and unpaid positions. Teaching assistants were involved with World Cultures (UN 1001) and acted primarily as graders of student work.

The courses each instructed also varied based on several circumstances and depending on the situation. Many of these graduate students taught courses that are widely available for graduate students to teach. For example, several had taught more than one section of Technical and Scientific Communication (HU 3120), which is possible after one year in the program and completion of the

streamhead Technical Communication and Technology Studies (HU 5003) course. Several of them also instructed as part of the Summer Youth Program (SYP) and the Pavlis Institute for Global Technological Leadership (Pavlis). Some of these graduate students also taught courses that are not typically available for graduate student teaching. Departmental circumstances and personal experience played a large part in these cases. For example, graduate students might have acted as sole instructor of upper-division courses because of vacant faculty positions. Or graduate students might have extensive experience with certain types of courses like visual communication or web design. The types of courses available for teaching vary widely based on your own background and departmental needs.

Departmental circumstances and personal experience also influenced at what stage during graduate study these students taught these courses. It was not common for graduate students to teach courses other than Revisions or Technical and Scientific Communication that are offered by the Humanities Department until after comprehensive exams. In cases where graduate students did teach courses other than these before comps, there were always other contextual considerations that seemed to contribute greatly. However, other opportunities such as teaching with the SYP or Pavlis were common for graduate students in their earlier stages of the program.

Now you may be wondering how to go about obtaining these types of positions. Questions three, four, and five helped to shed light on how the graduate students I interviewed set themselves up for these positions and attained them. First, these graduate students prepared themselves to qualify for these positions in a variety of ways. Many of these students gained the expertise necessary to instruct courses based on their own coursework. Others had prior teaching experience in certain areas that prepared them to teach in these areas in the Humanities Department. Some even had other workplace experience that they brought with them when they came to Tech, which provided them with the necessary skills to teach certain courses. Others seemed to be in the right place at the right time, or one opportunity led to another. No matter the circumstances, each of these graduate students was qualified to teach the course(s) assigned to them. Although some of them expressed some doubt about this, in my estimation they were all sufficiently prepared by former experiences either through coursework or other teaching or work experience. Despite the doubt you might have about treading new water as an instructor, as Semenza claims,

you *are* qualified to teach a section of undergrads. The students in front of you have little or no college education. You have a BA, maybe an MA, and,

presumably, a very solid academic record, or you wouldn't have been granted entrance into graduate school in the first place (104).

Fortunately, we can count on the faculty in this department to make the decisions about our qualifications to teach courses. This does not mean, however, that we can simply expect that we are qualified for certain positions. Each year you will receive a form for funding that allows you to apply for teaching positions, among other possibilities. The form also asks that you write a 200-500 word statement in which you describe why you're qualified to teach any course you're requesting that you've not taught at Tech. This allows you the forum for conveying your qualifications and reasons you'd like to teach certain courses. Many of the graduate students I talked with described how they used this form to obtain their positions.

Many others also described other measures they took to teach a variety of courses. All of these involved talking to people in the department. These graduate students talked to the faculty members who taught courses they were interested in teaching. They talked to the Department Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies. They also talked to other graduate students who were teaching courses they'd like to teach. It seems vitally important to talk to people. Let them know that you're interested in teaching certain courses. As one graduate student said, you need to "plant the seeds." Once these seeds are planted, you can help them to grow by nurturing the practical considerations that these graduate students recommend.

Practical Considerations

The final question I asked these graduate students encouraged them to share any advice they have with other graduate students hoping to broaden their teaching repertoire. The main theme that came out of these discussions was to be your own advocate. Being your own advocate involves effort on your part on many fronts. First, take courses relevant to the areas you'd like to teach in. Work hard and excel in these courses. When decisions are in the process of being made, the faculty will remember your work ethic and earnest effort. Second, get involved with opportunities provided within the department. Try to gain a seat on a steering committee, go to the monthly colloquiums, and attend other types of presentations. You can also make your own opportunities by asking faculty members to assist with one of their courses. You may be able to get permission to apply this experience as coursework credit, or you might just recognize it as a vital experience and do it without monetary or course credit. All of these opportunities might help you to be in the right spot at the right time, they could lead to other opportunities, or they might ensure that you are one of the people

faculty think of. Third, network. Do your investigative work, be persistent, and as one graduate student suggested, “be bolder than you think you should be, but be respectful.” Talk to faculty and other graduate students to build the kind of relationships that will lead to more possibilities. As another graduate student recommended, being your own advocate will allow you to “make your own opportunities by acting.”

Conclusion, or the End to the Beginning of Your Teaching Opportunities

One of the objectives of many graduate programs like RTC is to provide students with teaching experience to prepare them for future teaching endeavors. The MTU Humanities Department graduate program homepage affirms that the “doctoral program prepares students for research and teaching in academic, corporate, and governmental settings” and the “master's program, in addition to preparing students for further graduate work, provides education for technical communicators, consultants, trainers, and instructors.” Moore and Miller instruct graduate students who are teaching to “reach out for as much experience as possible” (39). Further, these experiences will improve your chances of getting your desired job. As Semenza assures us, “a strong teaching record is absolutely *crucial* to your success; quite simply, humanities Ph.D.s are not hired because of their research alone” (102).

Toward this end, the RTC program provides graduate students with many teaching opportunities throughout their time in the program. This exploration has yielded technical information about what positions might be available and how to qualify for and obtain these positions. It has also provided practical suggestions for placing yourself in the best position to acquire these positions to gain the experience necessary to enhance your teaching ability and the credentials necessary to secure a job in a competitive market.

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About the Contributors

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