

Policy for Allowing Advanced Ph.D. Candidates to Teach ENGL 2030

Current Policy: The current policy only allows graduate student TAs to teach ENGL 1010 and ENGL 1020, regardless of degree program. Both MA and PhD students teach these courses.

Proposed Modification: Require PhD TAs who have passed the PhD Qualifying Exams, completed all coursework in the required areas, passed the PhD Preliminary Exams, **and** are making continuing progress toward completion of the PhD degree to teach ENGL 2030 as TAs at least once before graduation. This goal could be accomplished by devoting one year as a TA to teaching ENGL 2030. The first semester the Lit TA would work 10 hrs in the Writing Center and would “shadow” a professor/mentor in a 2030 class. The “shadowing” would entail observing as the mentor teaches a section of 2030, working with the mentor to develop a syllabus and lesson plans, assisting in grading homework, exams, and papers, and in teaching at least one class each on poetry, short fiction, and drama. In the second semester, the TA would teach the requisite two classes or teach one class and work 10 hours in the UWC, depending upon the recommendation of the faculty mentor and the needs of the department.

The faculty mentor from the previous semester would continue to serve as a resource, meeting at least every other week with the student and observing the student’s teaching at least once in each section (if teaching two classes) during the semester. In this semester the student should also be observed by the Lower Division chairperson.

PhD TAs who are teaching ENGL 2030 should receive preference over adjuncts in assigning sections of 2030.

Rationale: As our PhD students prepare to go on the job market in our highly competitive field, they will be competing for jobs with candidates from other universities who already have experience teaching literature courses. Indeed, many of the applicants to our PhD program already have experience as adjuncts teaching introductory literature courses at the college level. In order to prepare our Literature track PhD candidates for their career goal of teaching literature and also to provide our graduates with the best possible opportunity for success in finding tenure-track jobs, we must provide advanced PhD students with the opportunity to teach introductory literature courses. The experience of teaching literature is crucial to our PhD candidates’ viability in a competitive job market—they cannot compete without it. As such, it is our obligation as a PhD-granting program to insure that our candidates have every possible advantage as they enter into the professional job market. Adjuncts have no such need.

Allowing the program’s advanced PhDs to teach sections of sophomore literature would not take too many sections of 2030 from tenured and tenure-track faculty, especially if the opportunity for advanced PhD TAs was limited to one academic year, or if such TAs taught one section of sophomore literature and also worked in the Writing Center. Since

we currently allow adjuncts who possess only an MA to teach 2030 it seems unreasonable to deny the opportunity to our program's own PhD candidates, who have more education in the field than such adjuncts.

It is incumbent upon our nascent PhD program not only to prepare our PhD students as well as we possibly can to teach at the college and university level, but also to provide them with the teaching experiences necessary to successfully compete for tenure-track jobs. It is with this concern in mind that I respectfully submit this proposal.