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**Office hours:** Mondays and Tuesdays 10 am to noon and by appointment

**Seminar meets:** Mondays, 1 pm to 3:30 pm, Austin 246

## SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

This seminar provides the space to discuss the contours and direction of your intellectual career at UConn and beyond. Our work will balance theoretical and practical approaches to academia and their intersections. Throughout the semester, we will discuss larger issues and issues in the profession, such as the cultures of academia, the politics of diversity and difference in university settings, and the changing nature of the job market for English PhDs, including opportunities in non-faculty employment. We also will develop concrete strategies to navigate the professional expectations that underpin a career in literary studies: taking exams, writing a prospectus and dissertation, publishing in scholarly journals, responding to revise-and-resubmit reports (which will include some vital talk about failing in academia), presenting and networking at conferences, thinking strategically about your research and teaching agenda, applying for grants and fellowships, composing instrumental documents such as teaching philosophies, reviewing articles and books, writing letters of recommendation, and designing effective and relevant upper-level syllabi.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

I have ordered one course text through the bookstore. You also can purchase this text elsewhere or borrow it from a library. We will supplement this text with additional readings, which I will provide through HuskyCT.

- Greg Colón Semenza and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., eds., *How to Build a Life in the Humanities* (Palgrave, 2015)

## ASSIGNMENTS

*Journal review: 10 percent of final grade*

*Due via email by 10 pm on Monday, March 25*

This journal review is designed to help you explore options for the publication of your revised essay. Choose four journals that might be a good match for your work, including among those options at least one top journal in your field. (What “top journal in your field” means will vary; I’m happy to talk to you about your criteria.) Spend time reading the most recent issues of each journal and researching its editorial policies and procedures. Compose a one-page analysis of each journal in a format of your choice. You might create a chart or a list of data points, a narrative, a mixture of the two — whatever you would find most useful. The only requirement is that your analysis should clearly evaluate each journal’s character and its suitability for your essay. You might want to consider the journal’s theoretical leanings; the style, scope, and methodology of the average essay it publishes; the ratio of established faculty to new scholars the editors publish; and its technical requirements, including length and citations. It will help to consult our class readings from Wendy Belcher on this topic as well as the *MLA Directory of Periodicals*, which is available online through our library. What distinguishes these journals from one another? How are they in line with your work, and where do their goals depart from your project? When considering which of these journals might publish your essay, how would you rank them? What might a publication in each venue communicate about you as a scholar?

*Reader’s report: 10 percent of final grade*

*Due dates TBD and will vary by student*

In anticipation of our major in-class workshops, you will be assigned the name of one classmate. You will review that classmate’s essay in the format of a reader’s report. While you will provide written and oral feedback on all of your peers’ essays, this report will provide your classmate with a more formal evaluation of their work’s strengths and weaknesses and provide you practice in writing such reports for academic journals. I will evaluate your reader’s report on its thoroughness, professionalism, and usefulness for the writer. We will discuss these reports in class, and I will provide examples.

*Teaching philosophy: 10 percent of final grade*

*Due via email by 10 pm on Monday, April 1*

While notoriously difficult to write, a teaching philosophy is useful in that it requires you to reflect upon and communicate your core values as a teacher and how they appear in the classroom. We will follow the format most frequently demanded by the academic job market — two single-spaced pages — but we also will discuss how and why this document is relevant to many professional contexts.

*Teaching Portfolio: 25 percent of final grade*  
*Due via email by 10 pm on Monday, April 29*

This portfolio consists of documents you produce as you reflect on your teaching, current and future, in both concrete and theoretical ways over the course of our semester together. It will include (1) a teaching philosophy, revised from its first submission on April 1; (2) a syllabus skeleton for one upper-level course of your choosing; (3) a plan for how you would teach one day of that course, in a format you see fit — as long as it's legible to me; and (4) an assignment for that course, with a rubric or notes on how you would evaluate student responses.

*Research portfolio: 25 percent of final grade*  
*Due via email by 10 pm on Monday, May 6*

This portfolio consists of documents that trace the revision of your chosen piece of scholarship. It will include (1) the initial, unrevised piece of writing; (2) abstracts pitching the essay, or parts of it, for two different conferences, past or future, with a link to the appropriate CFP; (3) material you circulated to your peers for your workshop; and (4) the final, fully revised article accompanied by a short reflection (500 words or so) on the revision process and your plans moving forward with the essay.

*Class participation: 20 percent of final grade*

Arrive to our seminar meetings on time and prepared, and contribute regularly to our discussions and workshops through comments and questions. Complete all small, ungraded assignments, such as short reflection papers.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

I encourage students who may need accommodations because of a disability to meet with me early in the semester. Students should also contact the Center for Students with Disabilities as soon as

possible if they have not done so already to verify their eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For more information, visit the Center for Students with Disabilities: <http://www.csd.uconn.edu>.

## **SCHEDULE**

This syllabus is subject to change. First, I will add workshop dates to our schedule once I meet with you one-on-one. Also, we may discover we want to spend more time on certain topics and less on others, or inclement weather may foil our plans. (This is, after all, Connecticut.) I will announce changes and, if necessary, post an updated syllabus on HuskyCT.

### **Week 1, January 22 through 25: One-on-one meetings**

We will not meet as a group during the first week of classes due to the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Instead, you will schedule a one-on-one meeting with me, using the Google Docs link I send via email, to discuss options for your semester-long article revision project.

### **Week 2, January 28: What are we talking about?**

What does “professional development” mean, anyway? What *should* it mean? What arguments have scholars staged about the advantages and risks of the increased pressure for graduate students to professionalize early? What are your own experiences with professionalization, as you understand it? Can we establish some guiding questions for our work together over the course of the seminar?

- Read: Guillory, “Preprofessionalism: What Graduate Students Want” from *ADE Bulletin* (1996); Ball, Gleason, and Peterson, “From All Sides: Rethinking Professionalization in a Changing Job Market” from *Pedagogy* (2015); and Strouse, “Getting Medieval on Graduate Education: Queering Academic Professionalism” from *Pedagogy* (2015)
- Submit: A two-page reflection on what you think professional development should be and a current CV by 10 pm on Friday, January 25
- In class: You will be signing up for peer review and reader report dates, and we will be reviewing expectations for those elements of the seminar, so come with your calendars.

### **Week 3, February 4: Starting where we are and looking ahead**

Keeping in mind our discussion of what professionalization is (and should) be, we’ll spend some time mapping out your next few years in UConn’s PhD program, addressing any questions you have about PhD exams, dissertation prospectuses and colloquia, first chapter conferences, and other benchmarks. We’ll also think about combating the stresses and anxieties that accompany these milestones—a conversation we can return to throughout the semester.

- Read: Review [the MA/PhD graduate student handbook on the English department's website](#). Read and annotate sample exam lists, exam questions, and dissertation prospectuses. Also read Houston's "Imposter Phenomenon," Lobo's "Academic Guilt," and Semenza's "Depression" from *How to Build a Life in the Humanities* (2015). Read Sarah Bertekap's material for peer review.
- In class: Introduction of email networking assignment
- Peer Review: Sarah Bertekap, with reader's report from Leah Begg.

#### **Week 4, February 11: How we work and who decides**

Let's think in both institutional and individual terms. First, what larger forces are at work in university settings that change the way we work, and how do some academics navigate those forces? How do faculty members experience those forces differently? One way to answer that is to look at our home institution. On a smaller scale, how do we develop our own working habits: the spaces we work in, the tools we use, the strategies we develop to be both productive and happy?

- Read: Tuchman, "The Escalation of Business as Usual" from *Academe* (2011); Gardner et al., "The Effect of State Budget Cuts on the Department Climate" from *Academe* (2014); and Part II, "Diverse Lives," from *How to Build a Life in the Humanities* (2015). Read Cat Williams's material for peer review.
- Prepare: Take some notes on your writing process—where and when you work, how you work, everything from your methods of research to the music you play. Be prepared to share with the group.
- Peer Review: Cat Williams, with reader's report from Asfia Qutub.

#### **Week 5, February 18: What you do and how to talk about it**

One of the most common, and yet most harrowing, questions directed at us as scholars: what do you work on? This question arises in both casual encounters — at the cocktail hour at a conference, over the dinner table at Thanksgiving — and in higher stakes, formal contexts—like at the start of a job interview. During this seminar meeting, we will talk about strategies for answering that query, but we also will think about what might be at the heart of the anxiety the question arouses. How do you present yourself as a Serious Scholar (but not a Snob)? That entails thinking about, for example, your research agenda and your persona in your scholarly work.

- Read: Shifting career path narratives; Hayot, "Showing Your Iceberg" from *The Elements of Academic Style* (2014). Read Paula Weinman's material for peer review.

- Prepare: Bring in an example or two of a scholarly article that, in your view, does a great job of one of the following: communicating its intervention (i.e., what is “fresh” about the author’s argument), responding to previous scholarship, or providing context for the author’s argument.
- Peer Review: Paula Weinman, with a reader’s report from Dan Healy.

### **Week 6, February 25: Conferencing, or, wearing your awkward name tag with purpose**

One of the perks of academic life is that you get to travel to exotic locations like Biloxi and sit in overly (or poorly) air-conditioned hotel ballrooms for hours at a time. But wait! Conferences can be great! We’ll spend this seminar meeting thinking about how to be a conference rock stars, touching on topics such as locating and responding to CFPs, organizing panels, writing abstracts, delivering a paper that doesn’t make listeners’ eyes glaze over, fielding questions, and networking (before, during, and after the conference).

- Read: Michie, “The Taxonomy of Questions” and “Abstract Guidelines”; Hayot, “Conference Talks” and “Jargon” from *The Elements of Academic Style* (2014); Bernstein, “Banish the Smarm” from *Vitae* (2017). Read Leah Begg’s material for peer review.
- Peer Review: Leah Begg, with reader’s report from Cat Williams

### **Week 7, March 4: Getting the money to do the work**

During this meeting, we will consider documents that require clear and forceful articulations of your work: grant and fellowship applications. How can you communicate the stakes of your research in evocative ways, to specialists and non-specialists? What UConn fellowships should be on your radar as a student, and what do their applications require?

- Read: Henson, “A Matter of Attitude” from *Grant Writing in Higher Education* (2004); Herrmann, “Grand Applications” from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (2012); sample fellowship applications, which you should review and annotate. Read Dan Healy’s material for peer review.
- Guest: Charles Mahoney, UConn English Department, who has reviewed applications for UCHI’s Dissertation Completion Fellowship
- Peer Review: Dan Healy, with reader’s report from Hannah Taylor

### **Week 8, March 11: Where to publish, why, how, and the many answers to those questions**

How do you determine where to send your work for publication? How do you learn about a journal’s editorial style, theoretical leanings, and policies? How can you publish strategically, in venues that will “count,” and what are the advantages (and pleasures) of publishing elsewhere? What pitfalls do you need to avoid when it comes to publishing your scholarship? Dwight Codr, who edits an

academic journal, will provide his point of view as part of our discussion. We will also spend some time discussing corresponding with editors and reviewers.

- Read: Hayot, “Institutional Contexts” from *The Elements of Academic Style* (2014); Schatz, “What Should Count?” (2004) from *Peer Review: A Critical Inquiry* (2004); Belcher, “Selecting a Journal” from *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks* (2009); and sample reader’s reports and other editorial correspondence. Read Hannah Taylor’s material for peer review.
- Guest: Dwight Codr, UConn English Department, editor of *LIT*
- In class: introduction of journal review assignment
- Peer Review: Hannah Taylor, with reader’s report from Aaron Proudfoot

**Week 9, March 18:** No class due to Spring Recess.

### **Week 10, March 25: Philosophizing your teaching**

Here, we begin a three-week consideration of teaching, focusing on different “cultures” of academia (and in particular the research university, the small liberal arts college, and the community college). This will by no means be an exhaustive review of the different types of institutions where you might work; however, it will provide you with an idea of the ways different institutional structures determine how professors use their time (or are expected to). This week, I’ll share my experiences as a faculty member at an R1 institution, and we’ll think about some big-picture questions related to how we can understand and communicate the role of teaching in our profession. (That means we’ll be discussing teaching philosophies.)

- Read: Qualls, “Life in a Research University” and Sullivan, “Teaching” from *How to Build a Life in the Humanities* (2015); Lewis, “Teaching Statement as Self-Portrait” from *Vitae* (2014); and sample teaching philosophies, which you should review and annotate. Read Asfia Qutub’s material for peer review.
- Submit: Journal review assignment, emailed by 10 pm
- Peer Review: Asfia Qutub, with reader’s report from Paula Weinman

### **Week 11, April 1: Syllabus design and working in liberal arts colleges**

Most UConn English PhDs who decide to work in academia and earn a position as a professor end up at teaching-centered institutions. These universities require a research agenda, of course, but the primary responsibilities of these faculty are in the classroom. During the first part of our meeting, we’ll have the chance to talk to a faculty member working at a small liberal arts college. We’ll end by discussing effective syllabus design for literature courses; we’ll also touch base about how upper-level teaching assignments work at UConn and what resources are available to support you.

- Read: Pannapacker, “Life in a Liberal Arts College” from *How to Build a Life in the Humanities* (2015); Fong, “Form, Gender, Pedagogy: Shaping and Engaging the Period Survey” from *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies* (2016); Bernstein, “What I’ve Learned: Three Steps to Designing Powerful Syllabi” from her *Racial Innocence* blog (2016). Read Aaron Proudfoot’s material for peer review.
- Skype Guest: Pete Kunze, Visiting Assistant Professor in Film Studies, Eckerd College
- Submit: Teaching philosophy, emailed by 10:00 pm
- Peer Review: Aaron Proudfoot, with reader’s report from Sarah Bertekap

### **Week 12, April 8: Managing class prep and working in community colleges**

Class prep is like kudzu. It will fill as much time as you allow. During this meeting, we will discuss strategies to manage class prep while maintaining high standards for your pedagogy, and we will think about the types of assignments you assign, those you aspire to assign, and those appropriate for your upper-level teaching. Before we do so, however, we’ll talk to a faculty member working in a community college, to get a sense of teaching, research, and service at her institution.

- Read: Boice, Chapters 1–5 from *Advice for New Faculty Members* (2000); Renner, “Grading” and Jenkins, “Life in a Community College” from *How to Build a Life in the Humanities* (2015)
- Prepare: Review the upper-level courses in our catalog and select two you might be interested in teaching. Request sample syllabi from Claire Reynolds and bring them to seminar.
- Skype Guest: Tali Noimann, Associate Professor of English and Children and Youth Studies Program Coordinator at Borough of Manhattan Community College

### **Week 13, April 15: Career exploration, and how to deal with the “it’s serendipity” explanation**

We will spend this seminar meeting discussing employment outside of faculty positions, considering strategies some have identified to help you land careers outside the academy (or non-faculty positions inside a university) and hearing first-hand about one PhD’s experiences in employment outside the tenure track.

- Read: Lesiuk, “‘Small Bets’ and the PhD Process: Alt-Ac Careers for Humanities PhDs” from *English Studies in Canada* (2013); and Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius, excerpt from “*So What Are You Going to Do with That?*”: *Finding Careers Outside Academia* (2014)
- Skype Guest: Molly Slattery, Proposal Development Specialist, Office of Research, Rice University



**Week 14, April 22: When one committee is created another must die, or service in the academy**

Faculty often bemoan service work as one of the most onerous elements of academic life. Truthfully, serving on departmental, college, or university committees can be tedious and time consuming, but that is not always the case. We'll spend this final meeting discussing what departmental and committee service might look like and the forms it can take. We'll also think about advising as service — with a guest to help us out — and discuss the task of writing letters of recommendation.

- Read: Review [the governance document on our department's website](#) and read Potter, "Departmental and University Citizenship" from *How to Build a Life in the Humanities* (2015) and Christensen, "The Value of Desire: On Claiming Professional Service" from *Over Ten Million Served* (2010). Read and annotate sample letters of recommendation and read Weldon, "Claiming the Right to Say No" from *Vitae* (2017) and University of Arizona Commission on the Status of Women's guide to "Avoiding Gender Bias in Reference Writing"
- Skype Guest: Michelle Maloney-Mangold, Student Success Advisor and Adjunct Professor of English, IUPUI

**Week 15, April 29: Where the archives are**

Let's end the semester with something that is, I hope, both useful and fun. We'll meet at the Dodd Center, where one of the archivists will arrange for us to see UConn's newly acquisitioned Maurice Sendak papers. These papers provide us an opportunity to discuss how to use an archive. What preparation does an archive visit entail? What work should you do before, during, and after an archive visits? What challenges and joys to archives hold for us as researchers?

- Read: Tirabassi, "Journeying into the Archive" from *Working in the Archives* (2010) and Gold, "The Accidental Archivist" from *Beyond the Archives* (2008)
- Submit: Teaching portfolio, emailed by 10 pm

**Monday, May 6: submit research portfolio, emailed by 10 pm**