



JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES THE MASTER'S PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION

Graduate study is intended to test and expand your intellectual horizons. In the Department of English and Modern Foreign Languages, our graduate students are expected to read, research, write, and think more and more comprehensively every semester. We expect you to be a different person when you graduate: a more professional, independent, and polished scholar. To that end, this orientation has been organized to assist you as you begin to tackle the challenges specific to graduate study in English.

In addition to the explanation of degree requirements laid out in the following sections, here are some tips for a successful graduate experience in this department that you should keep in mind.

- **Time Management:** Grades in graduate classes often hinge on one or two exams and a single research paper. The long periods during which you are not required to demonstrate your work can lead to a false sense of security and a very hectic final week of class, especially if you are enrolled in a full load of courses. Plan ahead for assignments; you are now expected to demonstrate your ability to perform as a responsible, independent scholar. Good study habits formed during your coursework will be invaluable when you reach the thesis-writing stage. The most difficult aspect of thesis writing is learning to motivate yourself to stay on task.
- **Academic Advisors:** Because the requirements of graduate study are different from and more strenuous than those of undergraduate study, you need an ally to steer you around the pitfalls. That ally is your academic advisor. Rather than viewing advisement as an unnecessary hoop through which you are required to leap, try to see it as an opportunity to establish a relationship with someone who may become your advocate later in your program. Your advisor knows not only the written rules of graduate study but also those unwritten expectations with which new graduate students are all too often unfamiliar.

- Graduate Program Coordinator: Activities, deadlines, and opportunities are communicated to all graduate students through a departmental email list and on the departmental website. Be sure that the Graduate Program Coordinator has your current email address so that you will always be well informed.
- Fellow Graduate Students: In all of your classes are other graduate students facing challenges and dealing with questions similar to yours. Build a network of peers who can serve as advisors and supporters. Collegiality and professionalism do not have to wait until after you have earned your degree and secured an academic appointment.
- Academic conferences: For students considering a career in academe, academic conferences offer opportunities for exposure to a wide variety of approaches to literature and for networking outside your university. You may wish to ask your academic advisor for recommendations on suitable conferences or you may choose to explore the conferences listed on the well-known website the Call for Papers at the University of Pennsylvania (<http://cfp.english.upenn.edu/>).