

Department of English and Comparative Literature Junior Faculty Mentoring

The Department of English and Comparative Literature put in place a mentoring program in 2012 for all junior faculty, after a process of extensive discussion across the department, in which senior and junior faculty were consulted. Junior faculty who were already here at the time of implementation were invited to participate; all new junior hires enter the program when they arrive. Our program aims to provide flexibly timed and intellectually useful feedback, with an emphasis on scholarship, and comprises readers from both inside and outside the department. It addresses the junior faculty's right to attention on their draft material, *outside of* the regular pre-tenure review process (i.e., the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and tenure reviews), and aims for equality of treatment across different subfields. Mentors also help junior faculty to navigate other aspects of the promotion procedures at Columbia, though the emphasis in this program is on reading the work and providing substantive, timely feedback on an ongoing basis. It is understood that the Department Chair meets regularly with junior faculty to help them with each stage in the process and to provide helpful, confidential advice more generally.

Senior departmental readers: Two senior faculty are assigned to each new junior departmental member at the point of hire. Ordinarily, senior faculty will not be asked to serve as reader for more than one junior colleague. The bulk of their task is to read and advise on the relevant book manuscripts and other key writings of the junior colleague (either a first book or, in some cases, a second: i.e., the book that will be judged at the 3rd and/or 5th year reviews), whenever the junior colleague feels such readings would be most helpful. Though mentors initially reach out to the junior faculty member, we expect the communication to happen in both directions, with junior faculty contacting mentors when they are ready to share work, and the senior faculty checking in at least once an academic year.

Outside reader: Once in a junior colleague's career, an outside reader can be selected (by the departmental readers and the junior colleague, in consultation with the Department Chair) to read the relevant book MS; that outside reader will, at the department's expense, be invited to campus (either by the junior colleague, or the chair) to meet with the junior colleague to discuss the work-in-progress and to offer advice. The outside reader will be reminded that this consultation is outside of our formal review process, and that the advice they provide is confidential in nature, intended only for the intellectual development of the junior colleague.

Note: given our budgetary constraints, a preference here should be given to "local" outside readers; a \$300 honorarium will be paid to the outside reader as well as transportation and lunch or dinner.

Administrative mechanisms: The following processes will apply to the selection and maintenance of the senior departmental reading teams:

- 1) It is the chair's responsibility to keep accurate lists of which senior faculty are assigned as readers to each junior faculty member.
- 2) At any point a junior colleague can approach the chair to ask that a reader be switched. The chair will then select a replacement reader.
- 3) It is the chair's responsibility to check in periodically with junior colleagues to see if the selected reading team is meeting his/her needs.
- 4) In the case of leave years for senior readers, the senior reader going on leave can ask to be relieved of his/her responsibility for the duration of the leave. The chair will then select a temporary replacement reader, if needed. However, we hope that senior readers will continue to work with their junior colleagues even while on leave.