Questions from Graduate Students (generated before event)
1. Is there a benefit to TAing before teaching a standalone literature course? Do you typically assign students to TA first, teach 101 first, or is it random?
2. Am I more likely to TA a course if the professor requests me? Can a professor advocate for me to teach a standalone course? (In other words, what sway does a professor have regarding graduate student assignments?)
3. Is there a hierarchy of preferences within graduate students? (I.e., PhD candidates, PhD pre-candidates, graduate TAs vs. graduate lecturers, other lecturers)
4. How are summer and winter teaching assigned? Are certain students given preference for these assignments?
5. Why do we fill out a form for the entire academic year? Can we switch to a semesterly form? How can we rank courses without knowing when they'll be offered?
6. How can students best fill out the form?
    a. How much do you take into account the free response boxes vs. the check boxes?
    b. What should we tell you/emphasize on the form?
    c. Can we rank whether we care more about the time slot vs. more about the course assignment?
7. How much do you weigh course/instructor fit vs. time slot/instructor fit? How can we emphasize which we care more about? Is there anyway you could match an instructor a course first, and then assign that course a time slot?
8. What is the cancellation policy for courses?
    a. What can students do to prevent their class from being canceled?
    b. What happens to a lecturer whose class is canceled?
    c. What happens to TAs who get removed from a lecture? How do you decide which TA to remove and which TA to keep the course?
9. How can I ensure that I teach a variety of courses and not get the same assignment? (In other words, being pigeon-holed as "the film teacher" or "the Shakespeare teacher")
10. How is 101 scheduled? What is the relationship between your office and the AWP office?
11. Will I ever have a chance to teach a 300-level course?

Discussion at Event
Introductions of student audience: Most important thing is to attach a person to a name on paper.
- (In other words, go meet and talk to Michele and Theresa!)
Introductions of staff:
- Michele Drummond: Has worked in UMBC handling scheduling; focuses on logistical coverage.
- Theresa Coletti: Has been previous director of graduate studies; focuses on matching courses with grad students' needs and interests.
- also attending:

- ○ Tom Moser, interested in what kind of classes graduate students want to teach (esp. at 200 level, for enlivening 200-level course offerings in near future)
- ○ Kevin Nesline: director of operations, oversees scheduling on a higher level

Q & A:
- When scheduled to teach 2 courses, what thought is given into what 2 courses are scheduled? (i.e. given 2 sections of 101 so only 1 prep?)
  - ○ list of course offerings should be presented earlier this year
  - ○ in online course preferences form
    - ■ what you write in free-form boxes important because that's where you declare your preferences
      - but preferences not always met; immediate needs of schedule are prioritized
      - Michele does read entire form; asks for us to give as much information as possible
        - ○ write any constraints you experience that would restrict you from teaching certain classes or certain days/times
        - ○ most people want T/Th, but we need to follow standard scheduling guidelines from universities (so MWF 50-min classes before 2 PM)
        - ○ tries to alternate assigning MWF and T/Th teaching each semester (ie. if you have MWF in fall, you get T/Th in spring)
  - ○ sometimes people want 2 preps, especially if one of those preps is a class you really wanted to teach
    - ■ you can note on the form whether you'd prioritize the class or minimizing preps
- How do you determine who is qualified to teach what courses? (CVs, preferences, group, etc?)
  - ○ information you provide on form is really important
    - ■ saying why you want to teach that particular class
    - ■ you may not have experience teaching a 200 level course, but if you have a background or interest in that field, you should declare it
  - ○ judgment call--Theresa gives personal recs based on people, Michele focuses more on the logistical side
    - ■ Theresa recognizes that many of us have interests beyond our declared focus of research studies
    - ■ important to have a variety of teaching experience in different kinds of classes
      - interests in courses with broad themes we're not currently teaching that we might want to offer in the future
        - ○ i.e. YA lit, fantasy
- What happens when you have several students in first slot (ideal slot) with same choice?
  - ○ ie. lots of interest in 20th century lit but few classes offered--how does everyone get a chance to teach in field?

- ○ this is a new problem because we offered so many more seats for undergrad classes than we do now
  - ■ 350 fewer English majors than we had 5 years ago
  - ■ 700 fewer seats in Gen. Ed courses
  - ■ Introduction to Poetry/What is Poetry the only lecture course (Stanley Plumly used to teach to 180 students)
  - ■ requirement for lit course was eliminated in the revised curriculum, which has led to the reduction in our class sizes (and therefore courses offered)
  - ■ never had a 200-level course that focuses on recent literature (American Lit 1845-present; Lit in Wired World only few)
  - ○ Michele looks at history of what grad students have taught and tries to offer new desired classes to students who haven't yet taught them
    - ■ make it clear when you fill out form (i.e. I've taught this many sections of 101 and this many sections of film and I really want to teach something in my field before I leave)
- ● What is the process like and how difficult is it to append your class to another gen ed requirement (ie. diversity)? How could we pitch our courses to appeal more to undergraduates?
  - ○ only 1 humanities requirement, which most students fulfil as a 2-fer (i.e Peter Mallios's ENGL 222 I-series course)
  - ○ 1-time approval or permanent approval
  - ○ once course changed to certify that it fulfills a gen ed requirement, changed forever; every subsequent class must be designed to fulfill those requirements
    - ■ i.e. Could create an American Experience class for diversity requirement (focus on 19th-20th century novels from different points of view about what it means to be an American), but would take a year to put together proposal and you might not actually get to teach it
    - ■ could work as an individual or a team to propose class
      - ● can put on CV as curriculum development
  - ○ we have old-fashioned survey classes
  - ○ English classes have a reputation of being more rigorous, so nonmajors don't want to take them
  - ○ not too many classes required for other majors
    - ■ i.e. English education, etc.
- ● What opportunities might there be to change the Teaching request form?
  - ○ can't be switched to semesterly vs. yearly
  - ○ ability to prioritize the days/times of teaching or the class
    - ■ you can use the free form boxes to do that
    - ■ Michele takes into account the numbering/weighting of the classes (i.e 1st choice vs. 5th choice)
  - ○ we can look into breaking the comment box into multiple areas to specify timing, course interest, etc.
- ● If we don't know when a class is being offered (especially if you want to TA for someone), makes it difficult to plan. Any way to signify when classes are being offered?

- ○ by time we send out form in January, we know what spring semester will look like; less so for the following fall
  - ■ get info from university about how many openings we can offer in February, so timing/accuracy is an issue
  - ■ few opportunities to TA except for I-series courses, ENGL 245 (film), and big poetry courses
    - ● those are always offered
    - ● trying to increase I-course offerings, but those don't always have TAs
  - ○ would be really helpful to list course preferences by semester in addition to time preferences by semester
- ● Is there an invisible hierarchy of preference to people who have been given TAships vs. lecturers? (esp. MFA vs. PhD)
  - ○ try to give people opportunity to teach what they want to teach
  - ○ PhD students pursue a course of study declared in a particular area, so "that is something we will pay attention to, but no one is guaranteed anything" (TC)
  - ○ grad students who have funding are assigned first, b/c they have to give them courses to teach; then grad students without funding; then lecturers
    - ■ university has created a new scale of lecturer titles: anyone who is a grad student w/o funding will be a junior lecturer
      - ● jr lecturers, once graduated, will be able to become lecturers with a pay raise
    - ■ obligation of program is to prepare graduate students
- ● What should we do if our situation changes in a way that affects our teaching preferences?
  - ○ send email to Theresa & Michele with updated situation so they can update their spreadsheet
    - ■ esp. if day/time availability changes, but also if course preferences change
- ● Are there courses that fulfil the English requirement but aren't usually staffed through English? If so, why? How can we position ourselves to teach them?
  - ○ very few; would be cross-listed (i.e. Asian-American Studies, Womens Studies, Jewish Studies, film, LGBT Studies)
    - ■ one department is the home department, which usually staffs the classes; we don't have much opportunity to put people in those classes
      - ● Testudo doesn't show it, but shown elsewhere
    - ■ unless home department isn't offering it, in which case we will
  - ○ possible for us to propose a cross-listed course?
    - ■ not easy to do
    - ■ our current cross-listed courses are those in which the cross-listing was part of the original course plan
      - ● probably existed before the other department existed
    - ■ hard vs soft-coded
      - ● hard: cross-listed built into course, exists forever

- soft: a course you want to try cross-listing, send syllabus to that department, see if they want to do it and give it a number; would be a 1-off
- How do summer/winter teaching assignments get made, and how can we indicate our interest?
  - of late, way it's worked has been to put out a call to the faculty to see what courses they're interested in offering for the summer, then email grad students to see who wants to teach them
  - Teresa proposing to add checkbox to online teaching preference form to indicate who will be interested in teaching winter/summer (in general)
    - most are blended classes
    - they are revenue-generating courses for the department (helps provide our travel funds, etc.), so they need to be ones that can generate a lot of appeal
      - try to offer classes that target constituencies that want to take winter/summer classes
    - you are unlikely to be able to offer a winter course of your choosing; summer a bit more likely
- Tom Moser would like to put forward 2 new 200-level courses in the next year
  - i.e. Graphic Novel
  - If anyone is interested in designing/proposing courses, talk to Bill Gonch (wgonch@gmail.com)
    - takes a lot of time, but Tom is willing to help