

Department of English and Comparative Literature  
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# Phillip R. Polefrone

## Education

### *Columbia University*

Ph.D. Candidate, English Literature (2013–Present)

M.Phil., English and Comparative Literature, 2016.

M.A., English and Comparative Literature, 2014.

Certificate, Columbia Publishing Course, School of Journalism, 2012.

### *New York University*

B.A., English and American Literature, 2012. *Magna Cum Laude*

## Grants and Awards

- 2015** SIPA and Carnegie Corporation of New York Grant for Doctoral Student Research on Internet Policy

Awarded funding for research into semantic patterns in online harassment of feminist activists. Using a corpus of thousands of tweets using the “gamergate” hashtag, considered the applicability of semantic categorization tools in characterizing online disputes.

- 2014** *Robert John Bennett Memorial Award*

Awarded to the best Master’s Essay on a comparative or interdisciplinary topic; “Gilman’s Garden: Ecological Economy, Coevolution, and Utopian Naturalism in *Herland*”, 2014.

## Publications

- Chapters** “Critical Computing in the Humanities,” with Dennis Tenen and John Simpson. *Doing Digital Humanities*. London: Routledge, 2016. Print. (link)
- Articles** “Regreening Technology: Gestures Beyond Prometheanism in Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Mars Trilogy*.” *Politics Slash Letters*. 27 June 2016. (link)

## Digital Projects

*Framework for Semi-Automated Literary Mapping*, 2016-2017. Columbia University Digital Centers Intern Program.

Developed an online framework for automatically tagging and georeferencing locations, particularly for use in literary mapping projects. Using Python, NLTK, and the GeoNames API, designed a process for detecting locations and recommending spatial coordinates to expedite human location tagging. Funding provided by Columbia University’s Digital Centers Internship Program.

*LitCity*, January 2016. CODEX Hackathon at MIT.

Contributed to backend development, natural language processing, and data analysis for a prototype of a literary traveling app. The prototype automatically extracted and mapped locations from a sample literary corpus, layering textual data from multiple texts over a map interface. More detail and demo on the hackdash.

*RogetTools*, Summer 2014. Columbia University.

Created a Python library for identifying and analyzing the broad semantic categories of words based on the category hierarchy of Roget’s Thesaurus. Description.

*Sortes Vergiliana/Pynchoniana Twitter Bot*, 2015.

Created and maintained a Twitter bot based on the principles of the “Sortes Vergiliana,” a form of bibliomancy in which a random passage of *The Aeneid* is consulted for divination purposes. Once developed, it was extended to Thomas Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow*. (Samples)

*Group for the Experimental Methods in the Humanities (Website)*. Columbia University.

Helped develop website using Jekyll: contributed to fundamental code, consulted on design and functionality, and discussed its place in the group's overall workflow.

## Teaching Positions

**Spring 2016 - Present** *Writing Associate, Cooper Union Writing Center*

Consulted with undergraduate students at the Cooper Union after receiving program-specific pedagogical training.

**Fall 2015 - Present** *University Writing: Readings in Sustainable Development, Columbia, University Writing Program*

Developed and taught a composition syllabus with a sustainable development theme. Topics included the commons, environmental justice, neoliberal environments, and environmental ethics.

**Spring 2015** *Computing in Context, Columbia, Computer Science and English*

As a teaching assistant, taught two weekly sections covering the intersection of digital and computational methods and literary theory. The material covered included both the basics of programming in Python and fundamental methodologies of Digital Humanities.

**Fall 2014** *History of English, Columbia, English and Comparative Literature*

Assisted in setting up lecture materials, grading, and leading review sections for a course covering the history of the English language from the medieval era to the present.

**2009 - 2012** *Undergraduate Writing Tutor, NYU Expository Writing Program*

Tutored undergraduate students in academic essay writing, commenting on electronic drafts and meeting with students; mentored new tutors.

**Summer 2010** *Writing Instructor, NYU Opportunities Program (BEST)*

Taught two daily seminars in literary analysis, research, and essay writing to students from underserved neighborhoods in Brooklyn.

## University Service and Affiliations

**2014-2016** Representative, Graduate Student Council, Department of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

Represented student interests and concerns to department leadership; helped organize events for current and incoming students; organized workshops for early-stage doctoral students. Spurred digital communications initiatives.

**2014-** Core Team Member, Group for Experimental Methods in the Humanities

<http://xpmethod.github.io>

## Publishing and Editorial Experience

**2012-2013** *Digital Production Assistant, Publishers Weekly*

Oversaw production of digital products and ad placement. Acted as liaison between sales department and tech team; general support.

**2011-2012** *Senior Editor, Mercer Street (student journal)*

Edited yearly anthology of student essays from across academic departments; selected and edited essays. Fact-checking and standardizing citation format.

**2009-2012** *Editor-in-Chief, West 10th (student journal)*

Oversaw digitization of journal at [west10th.org](http://west10th.org); commissioned content from board members; managed production of online archive.

## Book Selling Experience

**2012-2013** *Bookseller, Greenlight Bookstore, Brooklyn*

Managed offsite sales kiosk at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Manned sales floor and register, providing customer recommendations and assistance; maintained accurate inventory, organized displays and stacks.

## Other Work Experience

**Summer  
2009** *Database Intern, Broadridge-AccessData, Pittsburgh, PA*

Maintained and troubleshoot SQL code for automated database updates.