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**Suggestions and Information for People Getting PhDs**

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# GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR GRAD SCHOOL

* **Embrace and Enjoy Grad School:** It’s a huge privilege to have the time and space to read and think and research and learn. Enjoy it! (Although, of course, it will be challenging. So don’t get down when there are hard moments.)
* **Be Active, Don’t Wait, Don’t Be Shy:** Don’t assume “real life” starts after graduation. This is real life. Don’t wait to do the things you want to do. Write articles, make films, give papers, go to and apply for conferences and workshops, go to talks, meet and work with others, take initiative, seize any and all opportunities, and much more.
* **Take Care of Yourself:** Grad school can be hard, so don’t forget to leave and schedule time to take care of yourself in whatever ways are helpful (time with friends and family, activities away from school, meditation, yoga, spiritual practices, exercise, hobbies, etc.).
* **Check the Department Regulations on the Department Website:** This is where you will find rules and guidance about every aspect of the program and its requirements.
* **Stay in Touch** with me and other committee members, no matter where you are. Keep in touch especially if you’re away from campus; faculty are more likely to respond quickly to you if you are in regular contact.
* **Start Reading and Writing Groups:** They can be very helpful in providing support and improving your work. Plus, your grad school colleagues will likely be some of your closest friends and colleagues for life. Start building these relationships and helping one another now.
* **You Are Responsible for Your Progress through the Program.** Don’t assume faculty will prompt you about deadlines, degree requirements, progress, etc. This is your responsibility as a graduate student and scholar.
* **Use Coursework to Advance Your Dissertation Project:** A recent graduate said he wished he had focused more on his dissertation during course work. Don’t feel in a rush, especially first semester, but there are many ways you can advance your dissertation project during and with the help of courses.
* **Frustrated? Stuck? Questions? Having Trouble?** If anything like this is happening at any point, talk to me. And talk to others—faculty, students, family, friends. There’s no need to suffer needlessly, struggling on one’s own. Especially when you’re writing your dissertation or away from campus, don’t be shy about reaching out for help. When I was writing my dissertation, I unconsciously assumed I had to answer my questions before posing them to my adviser. This led to lots of unnecessary ruminating and wasted time. Don’t be like me. Reach out for help.
* **Office Hours:** There’s no need to email to set up a time to meet during office hours. You can come to my office anytime or sign up at the link in the header for a slot. If you need time outside office hours or need more than 30 minutes, email me with a few suggested dates/times or talk to me in person. If you’re outside DC, we can talk by online during office hours or otherwise.
* **Come to Meetings with an Agenda:** They’re much more productive that way.

# THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT MY EMAIL PRACTICES

* I try to check email only once per day in the morning. I do not check email on my phone.
* If something’s urgent, and you need a response that day, call and/or text me, don’t email.
* If you send me an email and do not get a response within a few days, I apologize in advance. As I tell all my classes, my delay is likely because I have gotten overwhelmed by the large quantity of email that faculty receive daily (in addition to other work). If there is an emergency, please call me on my mobile phone.
* Please *do not* use email if you have a lengthy question or item to discuss. Talking will be much more efficient and effective, so please talk to me (and other faculty) in office hours in such cases.
* A general guideline: If you have more than three questions, or if your email is more than 8 lines long, or if your email would likely require more than 8 lines of response, please come to office hours.
* In other words, use email only when it’s more efficient than talking in person or by phone. There are exceptions, of course, including at times when I’m reviewing your work, but I think it’s a good guideline that can reduce the screentime in all our lives.
* If you don’t hear back from me in a reasonable period of time by email or if it is an emergency, call my mobile.

# GETTING ORGANIZED

* **Get Organized.** Develop organization systems that work for you.
* **Program of Study Form:** Use it to plan your course of study through the program.
* **Shared google tracking sheet:** This is also a helpful way to plan and ensure you complete all the program requirements. *If we haven’t created one yet, please ask me.*
* **Calendar:** Make sure you have one both on a daily basis and for the longer term. Plotting your work semester by semester is very helpful. Include summers and post-graduation.
* **Filing systems:** Develop them for yourself, for paper and electronic files. Use them to keep track of course notes, notes from talks and other events, topics of interest, dissertation ideas, conferences, articles, and other readings (e.g., folders for each of these). I still use my undergrad and grad school notes for teaching and scholarship.
* **Note Taking:** Develop a system for everything you read. These will be very helpful for the purposes of comps, research, future study, and teaching.
* **Evernote (and similar platforms/apps):** Like some others, I find Evernote helpful to organize notes electronically and to keep track of articles for research and teaching (e.g., I have “notebooks” labeled by country hosting U.S. military bases, by topic, and by course names). Some people use it for ethnographic research notes (aka fieldnotes). You can save images, audio, and video into “notes” as well.
* **Bibliographic Software:** I highly recommend maintaining an organized bibliography using Zotero, Endnote, or another bibliographic organization software program. It will save you time and greatly assist your research and writing, now and in the future. Look for guidance and more information from the AU Library.
* **Back Up Your Data!** Don’t risk losing stuff. The few extra seconds it takes to set up a system online and on a laptop/external hard drive are worth it. Sending key documents to your own email is a good start.
* **Be Vigilant about Data Security!** This is essential in our world given pervasive corporate, government, and other surveillance. This is critical if you will be conducting ethnographic or other research with human beings. The IRB will demand a plan to protect your data about people in your research, but don’t wait: protect your data immediately.

# DOCUMENT NAMING TO STAY ORGANIZED

* **Be Systematic:** It will be very frustrating for you—and for faculty—if it’s hard to figure out the most recent version of a chapter, application, article, etc. Use this system—or a similar one—to clearly identify your work and when it was last edited:

[Your Last Name] [First Name] [Document Title] [4-digit year] [2-digit month] [2-digit day]

(e.g., “Mead Margaret Dissertation Chapter History 2023 04 11”)

* **Save and Change the Date** in the document name at least once every day you work on it. If you need to save different versions in a single day, add a,b,c,d…. to your document (e.g., “Mead Margaret Dissertation Chapter History 2023 04 11b”).

# GETTING FEEDBACK ON YOUR WRITING

* **Please: Double Space, 12 pt. Font, 1-inch Margins:** This will make editing easier.
* **Document Naming:** Don’t forget to follow the naming practice above or a similar one.
* **Feedback Turnaround Time:** Faculty clearly have other students’ work to review, their classes, their scholarship, and much more in their lives. So be kind and understanding. This will also help you maintain good relations with all your committee members. Plan ahead, building time spent waiting for feedback into your schedules.
* **My Feedback Turnaround General Rule:** 2 weeks for a chapter, long grant application, or chapter-length work; 1 month for a dissertation draft. If something is 1-4 pages, I usually can review the work in a day or so. If I’ve taken longer, please poke/ask me.
* **My Editing:** Editing is very time consuming, so most of my edits will, unfortunately, focus on problems rather than showering complements. The point, of course, is to help you improve your writing. Seeing markups on the page/screen is never super fun, I know, so don’t let this get you down. I consider you a colleague/peer/friend from the day we start working together, so I will give you feedback as I would another colleague/peer/friend. I’ll expect you’ll give my writing the same critical read!
* **Do I Have to Follow Editing Advice?** No. Your writing is your writing. You don’t have to agree with or follow my (or anyone’s) advice. But if someone raises a question or points out a perceived error or room for clarification or the development of an idea, it’s a sign that other readers might react similarly. If a committee member provides the same feedback repeatedly, however, it’s probably a sign you should take the advice (note: some faculty may feel adamant about your following all their advice from the start).
* **My Editing Symbols and Notations:** See last page to decipher.
* **My Handwriting:** If you can’t read something, let me know.
* **Share Your Writing with Others:** Getting feedback from as many perspectives as possible is a critical part of the writing process. Share early and often. Start a writing or dissertation writing group. Don’t try to make it perfect before you share!
* **Abandon Perfection as a Goal.** In writing and otherwise.

# GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC READING

In my opinion, detailed note taking and underlining or highlighting are essential to reading academic texts. Another useful way to ensure that you read carefully and are well prepared for class (and for academia generally) is to answer the following questions for each assigned text. I strongly suggest writing out the answers and any other thoughts inspired by a reading. These notes and your highlighting will help you write papers and prepare for exams without having to re-read entire pieces of writing. These strategies will also help in future classes and other academic work. Just be sure to *keep your notes!* (I still use my notes from college and graduate school.) Many also find that maintaining an organized bibliography using Zotero (free, open source online), Endnote, or another computer software program assists in the organization of notes, bibliographic citations, and future research and writing.

**Suggested Questions to Ask of Each Reading**

1) **Thesis and Findings**? What is the main argument or thesis? What are the other major arguments, findings, and conclusions made by the author(s)? What key sentences lay out the main argument(s)? What was the goal or aim of the author(s) in writing?

2) **Methods and Evidence?** What evidence does the author provide to support the main argument? What research methods did the author employ to collect evidence? What key authors or theories does the author build upon, advance, and/or critique?

3) **Significance?** What is the significance of the text—both for academic thought and the larger world? How might it help us understand related issues and phenomena?

4) **Your Analysis?** Are you convinced by the author’s argument? Why or why not? How is the text helpful? What, if anything, is missing from the analysis, discussion, or the presentation of data? How is the text weak or problematic? How could it be strengthened or improved (perhaps linked to the work of others)? Don’t just critique! Think critically about how an analysis can be usefully improved and built upon.

5) **Questions and Thoughts?** What questions does the reading raise for you? What other thoughts, ideas, or inspiration? What sentences or passages are confusing or need discussion? What sentences or passages are “keepers”—meaning that they are so important you want to keep them for the future? What parallels do you draw with other ideas or writing? Where does your mind go as you read? Your feelings? Write down any notes, thoughts, and even glimmers of ideas, no matter where they might take you. They will likely be helpful later.

**And keep the notes!** They will be incredibly helpful for future papers, other classes, comprehensive exams, dissertations and theses, and teaching (I still use my notes from college).

Many also find that maintaining an organized bibliography using Endnote or another computer software program greatly assists future research and writing.

# DISSERTATION

* **Pre-Dissertation Summer Research:** This is very helpful. Apply for AU funding, generally announced early in the Spring semester.
* **Research Questions:** Simple questions are best. Generally speaking, it’s best to get your questions from the people with whom you will be doing research rather than imposing your own. Pre-dissertation research can help with this. See my detailed advice about designing research.
* **ABD:** When done with classwork, be sure to check in with your committee members each semester, at a minimum.
* **Pre-Research Meeting:** We should have one shortly before you start so you feel settled and ready to get going.
* **Back Up Everything!** Create a system to ensure you lose none of your ethnographic research notes (aka fieldnotes), interviews, and other research materials. This can be especially critical in settings where you will have limited internet access.
* **Post-Research Committee Meeting:** It’s a good idea to have one in person or by phone/skype when you return from research to help get everyone on the same proverbial page and ensure everyone shares expectations about roles, timeline, etc. Additional meetings can be helpful as needed.
* **Dissertation/Thesis Seminar (ANTH-899):** Take advantage of this course to write and get support for your writing from other graduate students and the faculty member leading the class.
* **Returning the Results of Your Research:** Make sure you have a plan to return your research results to research participants and the many people who helped with your research. Carry out the plan. I consider this an ethical obligation.
* **Graduation:** I highly recommend going to Commencement. It’s an odd ritual in many ways, anthropologically speaking, but it’s a great and important chance to celebrate all your hard work and accomplishments!

# DEADLINES

* **Meet them.** It’s a good idea. ☺
* **If you are not going to make a deadline, let people know.** It’s far better to alert someone than to leave people wondering and, often, annoyed. This applies to classes, comp and writing deadlines, and far beyond.
* Don’t wait until the last minute to start papers, other classwork, recommendations, grant applications, articles, etc.
* A recent graduate pointed out that as time goes by in grad school, other than in your classwork, increasingly you will set your own deadlines and be the only person responsible for holding yourself to them.

# JOBS, POST-DOCS, AND POST-GRADUATION LIFE

* **Publish:** This will make a big difference on your c.v. for most jobs. Any publication, no matter the venue, looks better than no publications. Once you have one publication, consider publishing another on another topic. E.g., why not publish a paper from one of your courses? I would hope you would be thinking about this anyway, given the important work you can do in your classes. Better yet, why not write that class paper as an article (or with an article in mind) from the start?
* **Considering a Future in Academia?** One of my advisers gave great advice in saying that recent PHDs with publications on a topic outside their dissertation area are much stronger job candidates than those with only one demonstrated area of expertise.
* **Consider Jobs Outside and Inside Academia:** Given how competitive the academic job market is and given the important work one can do outside academia, I highly advise considering both paths. During graduate school I thought I was more likely to end up outside academia. From graduation to today, I have done extensive work outside the formal confines of academia. Know, however, that given persistent prejudices among academics, it’s generally difficult to get a tenure track job in academia after being outside academia for more than two to three years. That is, it’s easier to start in academia and then leave than to work outside academia and then try to return. Talk to me and others about these decisions.
* **Give Conference Papers:** They are a great way to force yourself to write a draft of an article or dissertation chapter. They are also a great way to build professional relationships. Often, they can lead to other opportunities. (Conference papers during grad school led to several publications and some of my closest colleagues to this day.)
* **Considering Academia? Consider Teaching (a bit):** Adjunct pay is exploitative, but having even one class on your record will distinguish you on the job market. That said, I had no college teaching experience when I got my first glorified adjunct job at AU post-graduation; in other words, there are always other ways to demonstrate teaching experience. Also, I wouldn’t teach more than two or three classes, at most, because the benefit to your c.v. will be negligible and there are more efficient ways to make money, leaving you more time for dissertation work.

# WHAT I WILL AND WON’T DO TO HELP YOU GET A JOB

* **What I Will Do to Help You Get a Job:** I will do everything I can to help you get a job (academic or otherwise).This starts with a promise to write (and provide orally) the strongest possible recommendations. This can also include help with strategizing (which should start at least one year before you expect to defend); cover letters; CVs; personal statements; interview prep; job talk prep; and more.
* **What I *Won’t* Do:** Like much of the job market, hiring in academia has long been plagued by faculty making phone calls to get their advisees jobs and exerting other improper, unethical, and potentially illegal influence over job searches. This has a discriminatory effect and clearly results in unfair advantage for some (who have tended to be Euro-American/White, male, hetero, and upper class). Again, I will give you the strongest possible recommendations, but I will not make special phone calls or exert any improper influence. Know, too, that the Department and I are trying to challenge this structural discrimination in academia.

# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION AND REFERENCES

* **When to Request?** Ask for recommendations from all your recommenders at least 1 month in advance (2 weeks minimum; under extraordinary circumstances, you can ask on shorter notice, especially if someone has already written you a recommendation);
* **Minimum Information to Provide for Each Recommendation:**

1)Name and address of institution, department name, and any specific addressee with their title (chair, director, committee name, etc.);

2) Mode and details of submission (most jobs will generate an email to recommenders prompting submission; let us know if there is );

3) Deadline;

4) Updated CV/resume;

5) Application essay(s), personal statement, or cover letter (draft is fine), as well as any other relevant writing samples;

6) Specific details about the position/opportunity to which you are applying, as well as any recent highlights and points you would like recommenders to emphasize.

* **Shared List to Keep Things Organized:** Especially if you are on the academic job market, a google spreadsheet or doc that you can share with all your recommenders can be very helpful. Include all the above info in the file. Making recs as easy as possible for your recommenders is also likely to yield better recommendations and ensure you maintain great relationships with your recommenders. ☺ This list will also help you stay organized. Make sure to indicate clearly which schools require recommendations as part of an application and which will contact recommenders if needed.
* **Reminders:** It’s your responsibility to make sure that all your recommendations are submitted for each application. Be sure to politely remind all your recommenders in advance of a deadline. If you don’t hear from a recommender, follow up with a phone call. If you really can’t reach another faculty member, let me know.
* **References:** Be sure to ask for permission to list someone as a reference. After I have served as a reference once, you don’t need to ask me again, but please let me know when you list my name so I am ready to receive a call or email.
* **Thank Recommenders:** Writing recommendations is time consuming. Expressing your thanks really helps, especially if you want people to continue providing recommendations.

# SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Questions to ask yourself early and often during your thesis, SRP, or dissertation project:

1. What’s the point of my project? What’s its significance? (For academia, the larger world, social change, social movements, others?)

2. What kinds of findings and outcomes will I produce with my project? (At the end, you must be able to articulate those findings succinctly and powerfully. If you can’t there’s a problem.)

3. Who is benefiting from my research? How will the findings of my work be useful to others—beyond getting me a degree, a job, recognition? Who are those others? Specifically, how are others benefitting? How are people participating in your research and making your research possible benefiting? If not, why not?

4. How are you going to make sure that others benefit? How are you going to make your work useful to others? How will it have influence and make some difference in the world beyond getting you a degree? What will you do to make it so?

5. How will your work contribute to improving the world in some way? If it won’t, what’s the point of anthropology, social science, science?

6. How am I taking care of myself to make sure I stay happy, healthy, and peaceful and that I can get through the very hard process that is graduate school?

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Below you will find what I hope will be helpful resources and suggestions about reading, writing, and academia, which I share with all my graduate classes. My editing abbreviation and symbol guide comes last. Here are a couple more helpful graduate school resources from others:* <http://www.aaanet.org/resources/students/>

<http://www.gradresources.org/index.html>

# ON WRITING

For guidance on generally accepted rules of writing, style, and proper academic citation, see the following style guides. Like AAA, I prefer Chicago’s style.

*Chicago Manual of Style* (available online through the library): <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.proxyau.wrlc.org/home.html>

*MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*

*Little, Brown Handbook*

# WRITING OP-EDS

You will have important research findings to share and important things to say in grad school. Op-eds are just one of many ways to share these ideas. If you haven’t already, I encourage you to use op-eds as a way to speak out on the basis of your scholarly work and training. There are many guides available online. Here are a few helpful ones.

Shipley, David. “And Now a Word from Op-Ed.” *New York Times*, February 1, 2004. <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/01/opinion/01SHIP.html>

Hall, Trish. “Op-ed and You.” *New York Times*, October 14, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/14/opinion/op-ed-and-you.html>

Duke University. “Op-ed Articles: How to Write and Place Them.” Duke University, Durham, NC. [*http://newsoffice.duke.edu/duke\_resources/oped*](http://newsoffice.duke.edu/duke_resources/oped)

The Earth Institute. “How to Write Op-ed Columns.” Columbia University, New York, February 2010. [www.earth.columbia.edu/sitefiles/file/pressroom/media\_outreach/OpEdGuide.doc](http://www.earth.columbia.edu/sitefiles/file/pressroom/media_outreach/OpEdGuide.doc)

The Op-ed Project [resources for writing op-eds]: <http://www.theopedproject.org>

# WRITING HELP

Please take advantage of the following resources.

**Help with Writing: AU Writing Center**  
[Writing Center](https://www.american.edu/provost/academic-access/writing-center.cfm) offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address your assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work. (Bender Library – 1st Floor Commons – [Schedule tutoring appointments on WC Online](https://american.mywconline.net/) – 202-885-2991).

**AU Academic Support Center Writing Lab**

MGC 243 <http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/Writing-Lab-About-Us.cfm>

The Writing Center and the Writing Lab are two separate offices providing similar services to all AU students. The Writing Center is located in the American University library and the Writing Lab is located at the ASAC in Mary Graydon Center 243. If there are no appointments available in one location, please try the other. For appointments: <https://american.mywconline.com>

# ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

**Academic Support and Access Center**  
All students may take advantage of the [Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC)](http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/index.cfm) for individual academic skills counseling, workshops, Tutoring and Writing Lab appointments, peer tutor referrals, and Supplemental Instruction. The ASAC is located in Mary Graydon Center 243.  
Additional academic support resources available at AU include the Bender Library, the Department of Literature’s Writing Center (located in the Library), the Math Lab in the Department of Mathematics & Statistics, and the Center for Language Exploration, Acquisition, & Research (CLEAR) in Anderson Hal, Room B-10l. A more complete list of campus-wide resources is available in the ASAC.

**AU Help Desk**

For IT issues (other than Canvas): 202-885-2550; [helpdesk@american.edu](mailto:helpdesk@american.edu), or [AskAmericanUHelp](http://www.american.edu/oit/HelpDesk-Chat.cfm) Answers to your technology questions are just an e-mail, instant message, or phone call away. Contact the IT Help Desk at to reach one of our professional staff who can answer your questions and provide general troubleshooting assistance. Students can also log on to the [Need Help Now?](http://www.american.edu/oit/Need-Help-Now.cfm) portal for support.

**Canvas Support**

Canvas says: “If you encounter any technical difficulties, please use the **Help** icon found on the Global Navigation for support**.** Please ensure you contact support immediately.”

**International Student & Scholar Services**  
[International Student & Scholar Services](https://www.american.edu/ocl/isss/index.cfm) has resources to support academic success and participation in campus life including academic counseling, support for second language learners, response to questions about visas, immigration status and employment and intercultural programs, clubs and other campus resources. (202-885-3350, Butler Pavilion 410).

**Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution Services**

Butler 408; 202-885-3328; <https://www.american.edu/ocl/sccrs/>.

**Student Health Center**

202-885-3380, McCabe 1st Floor; [www.american.edu/healthcenter](http://www.american.edu/healthcenter).

**Students with Disabilities**  
If you wish to receive accommodations for a disability, please notify me with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center. As accommodations are not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is strongly recommended. To register with a disability or for questions about disability accommodations, contact the Academic Support and Access Center at 202-885-3360 or [asac@american.edu](mailto:asac@american.edu), or drop by MGC 243. For more information, visit AU’s [Disability Accommodations web page](https://www.american.edu/provost/academic-access/documentation-and-eligibility.cfm).

**Writing Center**: See “Writing Requirements and Help with Writing” above for information.

# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

**Center for Diversity & Inclusion (CDI)**

[CDI](http://www.american.edu/ocl/cdi/) is dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, multicultural, first-generation, and women's experiences on campus and to advancing AU's commitment to respecting and valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy. It is located on the 2nd floor of Mary Graydon Center (202-885-3651, MGC 201 & 202).

**Counseling Center**  
The [Counseling Center](http://www.american.edu/ocl/counseling/index.cfm) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources. (202-885-3500, MGC 214).

**Dean of Students Office**  
The [Dean of Students Office](http://www.american.edu/ocl/dos/) offers individual meetings to discuss issues that impact the student experience, including academic, social, and personal matters;  making referrals to appropriate campus resources for resolution.  Additionally, while academic regulations state that medical absences are to be excused, if faculty require documentation to verify the student’s explanation, such documentation should be submitted to the Dean of Students.  The office will then receive the documentation and verify the medical excuse.  Faculty have the discretion to approve absences and do not need permission from the Dean of Students to excuse absences.  Students should be sent to the Dean of Students only if faculty require further proof or if they have concerns about the impact of absences on the student’s ability to succeed (202-885-3300, Butler Pavilion 408).

**Food and Housing Insecurity**   
Students facing challenges securing food or housing should be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students ([www.american.edu/dos](http://www.american.edu/dos) or 202-885-3300) for support and referral to resources.

**Names and Pronouns**

As an AU student, you are able to change how your preferred/proper name and pronouns show up on AU email, Canvas, and your AU ID Card. This option is helpful for various student populations, including but not limited to: students who abbreviate their first name; students who use their middle name; international students; and transgender students. As a faculty member, I am committed to using your preferred/proper name and pronouns. We will take time during our first class together to do introductions, at which point you can share with all members of our learning community what name and pronouns you use, as you are comfortable. If these change at any point during the semester, please let me know and we can develop a plan to share this information with others in a way that is safe for you. Should you want to update your preferred/proper name, you can do so by looking at the [guidelines and frequently asked questions](https://www.american.edu/ocl/cdi/TRG.cfm)from the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

**Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence**  
[OASIS](https://www.american.edu/ocl/promote-health/OASIS.cfm) provides free and confidential advocacy services for students who have experienced sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, sexual harassment, and/or stalking. Please email or call to schedule an appointment with a victim advocate in OASIS. ([oasis@american.edu](mailto:oasis@american.edu), 202-885-7070, Health Promotion and Advocacy Center – Hughes Hall 105). Students can also book an appointment with one of our two confidential victim advocates.

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# AU’s NON-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICIES

*American University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy or parenting, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual’s genetic information or any other bases under applicable federal and local laws and regulations (collectively “Protected Bases”) in its programs and activities. The University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and stalking.*

As a faculty member, I am required to report discriminatory or harassing conduct to the university if I witness it or become aware of it – regardless of the location of the incident. There are four confidential resource on campus if you wish to speak to someone who is not required to report: Counseling Center, victim advocates in OASIS, medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center. If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with [University Police](http://www.american.edu/finance/publicsafety/index.cfm) (202-885-2527), the [Office of the Dean of Students](http://www.american.edu/ocl/dos/) ([dos@american.edu](mailto:dos@american.edu) or 202-885-3300), or the [Title IX Office](http://www.american.edu/ocl/TitleIX/index.cfm) (202-885-8080 or [TitleIX@american.edu](mailto:TitleIX@american.edu)). For more information, including a list of supportive resources on and off-campus, contact [OASIS](https://www.american.edu/ocl/promote-health/OASIS.cfm) ([oasis@american.edu](mailto:oasis@american.edu) or 202-885-7070) or check out the [Support Guide on the Title IX webpage](https://www.american.edu/ocl/TitleIX/support.cfm).

Review the complete [Discrimination and Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policy](https://www.american.edu/policies/au-community/discrimination-and-non-title-ix-sexual-misconduct.cfm).

**AU’s Sexual Harassment Policy**

American University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity that it operates, which includes admission and employment. Consistent with the procedures set forth and referenced in this Policy, the University will take steps to eliminate Title IX Sexual Harassment, prevent its recurrence, and remedy any discriminatory effects for members of the AU Community.

It is the responsibility of every member of the AU Community to foster an environment free of Title IX Sexual Harassment. All members of the AU Community are encouraged to take reasonable and prudent actions to prevent or stop an act of Title IX Sexual Harassment. Taking action may include direct intervention when safe to do so, enlisting the assistance of friends, contacting law enforcement, or seeking assistance from a person in authority.

If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with the AU Department of Public Safety (202-885-2527( or the Office of the Dean of Students (202-885-3300; [dos@american.edu](mailto:dos@american.edu)). Please keep in mind that all AU Community members employed by the University (including student employees, such as teaching assistants, resident assistants, and orientation leaders) and individuals covered by the University’s Out-of-State Staffing Policy have a duty to report Title IX Sexual Harassment to the [Title IX Coordinator](mailto:%20TitleIX@american.edu) (202-885-8080), when they become aware of such conduct.

Review the complete [Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy](https://www.american.edu/policies/au-community/title-ix-sexual-harassment-policy.cfm).

# MY EDITING ABBREVIATION AND SYMBOL GUIDE

*Note that I try to provide detailed comments on all written work. I will focus on areas for improvement rather than on providing praise. I do this not to be mean but to help improve your writing and your work. If you can’t read or understand my comments, always come and ask me.*

¶ = new paragraph

# = insert space between lines or characters

? = unclear, clarify

> = more  
< = less

adj = adjective

adv = adverb

anth or anthro = anthropology; anthros = anthropologists

assump(s) = assumption(s) (are you making them?)  
awk = awkward (construction, phrasing, wording, etc.)

bc = because  
b/n = between

cf. = compare [Latin]

cite = citation needed

e.g. = for example [Latin; sometimes I use this to mean “example”)

gr = grammatical error

graf or ¶ = paragraph   
HDYK? = How do you know? (What evidence do you have?)

i.e. = that is [Latin]

intro = introduce/introduction

ital(s) = italicize (italics)

judg(s) = (Are you making unfounded) judgment(s)?  
l.c. = lower case

passive = ineffective passive voice verb form (use active voice/an active verb)

p. = page; pp. = pages

Q = question (also Q-ing = questioning; Q-ed = questioned)

qte = quote or quotation (also qting = quoting; qted = quoted; note don’t use *quote* as a noun)

RO = run-on sentence  
SDT = “show don’t tell”  
sent = sentence

signif = significance or significant

sp = spelling error  
tense = error in verb tense

trans = better transition needed between paragraphs or sections

u.c. = upper case

v. = very

w/ = with

w/o = without

wc = word choice? (i.e., is this the best word? Find another?)

WDYT? = What do you think?