

Learn the Ropes

FRESHMAN ORIENTATION BOOKLET

BA PROGRAMME, ACADEMIC YEAR 2015/2016
INSTITUTE OF ENGLISH STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW



A Few Words of Welcome from your **Director**



Małgorzata Grzegorzewska was elected Director of the Institute of English Studies in 2014.

Her academic specialism is Early Modern Literature. She has written a number of books and articles on Shakespeare and the anthropology of myth and tragedy.

In 2015, our students voted her an Inspiration for Tomorrow in the Mentor category.

Dear Freshmen and Freshwomen,

First of all, **congratulations** are in order: you have joined a highly accomplished body of students. Our Institute attracted over 1,700 applicants this year, a record number despite the tough demographic situation, but fewer than one person in ten is now a proud freshman or freshwoman reading this letter. We are thrilled to have you on board. Well done, and welcome to our Institute!

Like any new experience, your start to university life can feel exhilarating and confusing at the same time. I hope this orientation booklet will dispel some of the confusion, and make you even more exhilarated about the next three years, a period most people think back to as one of **the happiest and most inspiring times** in their life.

You are joining our Institute during a time of change. We have recently moved into a different building, and we are excited about the potential our expanded premises will offer. We

hope you will bear the inevitable teething problems with patience and good grace.

As an old and true saying goes, **education is the lighting of a flame, not the filling of a vessel**. My colleagues and I look forward to sharing our lifelong fascination with English and the various literatures and cultures it has been producing for the past 1,500 years.

We hope you will approach those subjects with the same passion and excitement!

About your Institute



Hoża 69 is a place with an impressive amount of history. Formerly home to the University's Physics Faculty, the main building has seen many Nobel Prize winners and pioneering researchers over the last 100 years. Now it's our turn to write a new chapter in its long life.

You're going to study English, and you will be using the language on a daily basis. However, if there is one thing we would like you to understand above all else, it's that **we are a humanities institution, not a language school**. Good English will be your tool, not an end in itself. Your courses will reflect this humanistic focus on language, literature and culture, history and performing arts. Our role will be to invite you to reflect on the human condition, and to live an examined life as an individual and as a member of society.

“Good English will be your tool,
not an end in itself.”

You will be experiencing your Institute as a student, but you should also know that we are a **research institution**. Besides teaching, our academic staff do research and publish their findings in books and academic journals. The Institute has **five departments** (British Literature, American Literature, British and American Culture, Linguistics, Applied Linguistics) dealing with different areas of human knowledge and experience, and our library contains thousands of scholarly volumes on each of those. All of our staff members have their own specialisms (areas of expertise).

The Institute of English Studies is part of a larger unit, the **Faculty of Modern Languages** (*Wydział Neofilologii*), headed by a **Dean** (*Dziekan*). **Prof. Maria Dakowska**, our esteemed colleague from the Institute of English Studies, has been our Dean since 2015.

We are the Faculty's largest institute, and we take satisfaction in working as a team and cultivating good relations within the Faculty of Modern Languages. Please always be friendly and respectful towards students from other institutes.

More about **your Institute**

I'm not a local, what's the best way to get around the city centre? Warsaw has the most extensive public transit system in the country. Use the tram or bus lines stopping at Aleja Niepodległości, or walk to the Central Train Station to change for local transit or long-distance trains. If you live nearby, a bike is a cheap and practical alternative when the weather is nice.

Which of the offices will be relevant to me? In terms of study requirements for your BA programme (like foreign languages or fitness classes), see page 9 ("Good to know"). In terms of formal and administrative issues, you will be mostly dealing with our local **Sekretariat ds. studenckich** (Student Affairs Office) at our Institute (Room 332, Hoża 69). If you have a highly unusual situation you can talk to Elżbieta Foltyńska, our Director for Student Affairs (**Dyrektor ds. studenckich**).

What are duty hours? In addition to your regular classes, every member of staff will have regular duty hours. This is a fixed time during the week when they are available in their department office (pokój zakładowy), usually for 90 minutes, to discuss course material or handle technical issues to do with your credits and essays. Everyone's duty hours are posted on the Institute website and at the door of the relevant department office.

Feel free to come to people's duty hours! You can use this time to discuss class content, ask for clarification or simply learn more. It's okay to come unannounced, but you may want to talk to your teacher and schedule an appointment beforehand so you can have a time slot for yourself (especially in the busy periods around exams).

What about student government? Your student government is the voice of the student community. You elect the student government members who will be involved in things like scholarship procedures and general policymaking at our Institute.

At a minimum, be interested: take part in **elections** when they happen, follow the Facebook page ([goo.gl/m8mciN](https://www.facebook.com/googl/m8mciN)), come and talk to your elected representatives in **Room 223** when you feel there's anything that needs their attention. Obviously, you can also put up your own name for election and run for a student government position!

... and about **our building**

More than a hundred years old, the building at Hoża 69 has a fairly complex layout. You will know you're no longer a freshperson when you can get around without getting lost! Check out the map of the Institute on our website, and in the meantime here are some of the things you need to know about the building.

Which entrance should I use? You can reach our Institute from any entrance. In our experience **Entrance A** works best unless using stairs is a problem. If you can't use the stairs, the main entrance is best as it has access to a lift.

Oh, there's a lift in the building? Yes. The lift is located in the main body of the building (what you see directly in front of you as you walk through the main gate). Use the main door, go up the single flight of stairs (no worries, it's fitted with a chairlift) and past the porter's lodge, then turn right.

Where can I get something to eat or drink? You have several options. • There is a **kitchenette** in Room 238 where you can make yourself some tea or coffee, and use the microwave oven to heat up your own food. • The photocopy dude on the third floor sells snacks and bottled drinks. • There is a vending machine selling snacks and canned drinks on the ground floor next to Entrance A. • Finally, there are any number of shops, bars, restaurants and cafes in the area.

I've seen some scary laser warning signs. What's that about? Ah, yes. The lasers. Parts of the building are still being used by the Physics Faculty, who have all manner of heavy machinery, liquid gases and scientific devices for studying quantum effects and such. It's all perfectly safe as long as you don't mess with their stuff. So, don't mess with their stuff, and you'll be just fine.

What's the difference between the BUW and the Institute Library? Our Institute's library (located in the main body of Hoża 69) and the Library of the British Studies Centre (Rooms 048-053 on the ground floor, entrance A) are one of the country's largest collections of English sources. You can read those books in our atmospheric reading room or loan them to study at home.

The BUW is the University's main library, located in a stunning modern building (Dobra 56/66). This, too, has reading rooms and a lending library. In addition, you are free to use the libraries of other UW faculties and institutes if needed. Also, the BUW website (www.buw.uw.edu.pl) gives you remote access to digital content, so you can read electronic journals and other resources from the comfort of your own home.

Some words of wisdom from a fellow **student**



Hi, my name's Kasia Krupa, and I'm currently a graduate (MA) student at the Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw.

Your university years will be about so much more than studying and taking tests. Use this time well: **get involved in student organizations and institutions, travel, take part in an academic exchange, try to get into an interesting internship.** To illustrate my point, let me tell you briefly about my experience this year.

My interests include American culture, social media and public relations. I follow the US Embassy on Facebook (obviously), so when I saw them invite people to join their social media team as interns I knew it was an excellent place for me. I was in my senior (last) year of my undergraduate (BA) programme at the time. I applied and got accepted, and I think it was my best professional decision so far!

I spent three months working in the Public Affairs department, where I was one of the people responsible for the social media presence of **US Embassy Warsaw**. I wrote posts for their fanpage, took part in

various events held or organized by the Embassy, and generally helped out around the office. My internship gave me a "behind the scenes" experience of Public Diplomacy, and provided me with insights into diplomatic communication in general. I was involved in a number of interesting projects and events, and I learned a lot from being around a fantastic team of people. All in all, my internship at the US Embassy was an unforgettable experience.

Your life as an undergraduate may seem busy and demanding, but in many ways it really is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Be active, get involved, go on an Erasmus scholarship, apply for internships. Don't squander this amazing time in your life!

University life is like a musical instrument. In the right hands it can be a thing of beauty, but you have to know how to play it! Similarly, **your university experience is what you make of it**. Here are some of the things we can offer in our Institute on top of regular academic tuition: make the most of them!

Your Place for Growth

1 Interest Groups

Be intellectually curious. Our students have formed a number of academic **interest groups** (*koła naukowe*). Join or start one to watch the world's best and worst movies, translate books, and explore history, literature and culture. We are also planning to launch a **podcast** on all things English — check it out when it goes live.

2 Competitions

Our Institute organizes several competitions. One, called **Rising Stars**, rewards students who have impressed our staff with their potential and work ethic. In another, **Inspiration for Tomorrow**, you nominate your favourite academic teachers who are helping you become the best version of yourself. Get involved in those and other competitions!

3 Volunteering

Don't sit on your hands — do things! Volunteer to help out with events like manning our stand at **UW Open Days**. Or maybe you like to organize things? Get involved in **student government**. Do you support a charitable cause? Launch a campaign and **raise money** for it.

4 Study Tips

In your first year you will be receiving **emails** with tips and advice on how to be a more effective learner and thinker. We are planning a short series of **workshops** on effective language study techniques aimed primarily at our fee-paying students. Please **tell us** if there is anything else you would like to see included in those emails or workshops.

5 Institute News

Never miss out on important news or announcements. Visit our shiny **website** often, follow our **Facebook page** to show local pride (and like the things we post to help attract new talent in future years). Be open and helpful towards your new friends, particularly the international students. Take part in **events** like Christmas parties or student government elections.

6 Picnics

In the warm months the large lawn in front of our building is great for **picnics**. Pack a blanket and some lunch snacks, grab a friend (or seven), and head for the lawn or the benches to enjoy a relaxing half-hour. Just remember to leave the place tidy!



Make good use of **YOUR CITY**

Like many capitals, Warsaw may seem hurried and chaotic at first. But give it time, and you'll appreciate just how dynamic, friendly and creative it can be. Since Poland's democratic transition in the 1990s our city has gone from a drab backwater to the fastest developing city in Central and Eastern Europe. Today, Warsaw has hundreds of cultural institutions, and more than 4.5 million sq.m. of modern office space leased by thousands of businesses. Use this potential well!



Hundreds of cultural events big and small take place in the city every week, many of them free. Your BA programme will be 100+ weeks long. Make a ritual of reading cojestgrane.pl or similar every Thursday to plan a weekend culture fix. **If, by the time you graduate, you don't get to experience 100+ things** like art exhibitions, music concerts, plays, book fairs, pottery workshops, street art, murals, public debates, open lectures, flash mobs, live poetry readings, book signings, festivals of all kinds, religious services, temporary art exhibitions, art galleries and auctions, rare books dealers, master classes, parks and public spaces, political protests, dance/ballet performances, science fairs, airshows, football games, sports events, indie films, etc., **you are doing it wrong!**



Speaking of films, Warsaw has dozens of cinemas, many of them quirky, niche or seasonal. Don't stick to standard Hollywood fare in the multiplexes – push your cinematic comfort zone. • Watch ambitious but still pretty mainstream films in **Kino Muranów**. • Visit **Iluzjon Filмотeki Narodowej** often for screenings of timeless classics, forgotten gems and historical curiosities (they also have a nice cafe in a leafy square). • Are you **internet savvy**? Seek out award-winning documentaries or critically acclaimed book adaptations to make new discoveries. Happy exploring!



Much academic material today is digital but studying in libraries will always be a wonderful and memorable experience. Three Warsaw libraries are particularly unmissable. • The atmospheric **National Library** (*Al. Niepodległości 213*) is within easy walking distance of our Institute. • **Warsaw City Library** (*ul. Koszykowa 26*) has reopened after an extensive PLN 60 million renovation, and looks awesome. • Last but not least, our **University Library (BUW)** is a joy and a privilege to use (check out the rooftop gardens). Get library cards from all three as a personal project!



Several world-class museums have recently opened in the city; each will reward many repeat visits. • Warsaw's motto is *Semper Invicta* (Ever Invincible): **The Museum of the Warsaw Uprising** is a moving memento of the city's heroism and near-total destruction in 1944. • The best thing about the **Chopin Museum** is its enormous collection of recordings – head for the listening area downstairs to enjoy a treasure trove of pianistic excellence. • Finally, the new and architecturally stunning **POLIN – Museum of the History of Polish Jews** celebrates the history and cultural contributions of Polish Jews, who were once one of the world's largest Jewish communities.



Your University: **good to know**

Office for Student Affairs. This office deals with student **accommodation** (dormitories or “akademik”) and student **insurance**. Please read the material in the **Sekcja socjalna** menu on their website, <http://www.bss.uw.edu.pl/nowa/> (Polish) or <http://www.bss.uw.edu.pl/en/> (English)

Fitness and Physical Education classes. Regular Physical Education classes are a requirement for your degree. **You need to complete (and, importantly, get official credit on USOS for) a total of 4 (four) semesters of Physical Education classes during the first two years of your BA degree programme.**

Did you hate gym class in high school? Cheer up – this is grownup stuff now, with all manner of free fitness classes from team sports to jazz dance, fencing, rock climbing, yoga or Pilates. Other activities, like martial arts or horse riding, are available for a reasonable extra charge.

Foreign language classes. As a BA student you must pass a B2-level language certification exam in a language **other than English or your native language** as a diploma requirement. You will need to register for, and pass, an internal university B2 exam by the end of Year 3.

You need to take **4 (four) semesters** of language tuition in any of the languages taught in our University’s Language School (<http://szjo.uw.edu.pl>) starting in your second year. The range of options is breathtaking but please bear in mind that you’ll need to take the exam at the end, so don’t choose to learn a very difficult language from scratch.

Disabled students. Some of our student have disabilities. Sometimes those disabilities are obvious, sometimes they’re not. Be friendly and tactful: have an open mind and don’t focus

on the disability. There’s a lot more to people than being able to walk fast or speak clearly. Disabilities aside, our disabled students are just like you. They have their dreams and ambitions, and real academic accomplishments.

Ask people if they need help, but don’t be bossy or overwhelming about it. Many handicapped people have learned to cope with their limitations or work around them. Some don’t even think of their limitations as “disabilities”. **Offer help where needed, but other than that just treat disabled students the same as you would all your friends.**

If you have a disability and want to learn more about the University’s assistance options, visit the University for All website at www.bon.uw.edu.pl (English version available). If you want to learn more about disabled people’s perspective, read this booklet (in Polish): goo.gl/F44r9C

Mental health. At any given moment about 20% of the population are experiencing some form of mental health problems, ranging from mild emotional or behavioural impairment to severe mental illness. Just like physical illness, mental health problems are natural and often treatable. **If you need support, follow the link below. If you are concerned about a friend** who is becoming sad, detached, withdrawn or suffers from mood swings and/or substance abuse, please note they may be unaware of their problem. Have a tactful and non-invasive conversation and show them this link to our University’s support resources (in Polish): goo.gl/CAZxNQ

Mental illness is illness. Don’t try to treat or medicate yourself or your friends, just like you wouldn’t try to treat anyone with pneumonia or a burst appendix. Get help, and get well.

Master your **USOS**

Like fire, USOS is a good servant and a terrible master.
Learn its various functionalities and show USOS who's the boss
or suffer the consequences!

What is USOS? USOS is an online system you will be using to register for classes, earn credits and communicate with your teachers. We'll be the first to admit that including the acronym "S.O.S." in a product name is not the smartest marketing choice. However, **USOS is a versatile and useful tool used by students, administrators and teaching staff in many Polish universities.** USOS will be the central hub of your academic experience. It's very important that you understand it well.

Go to **usosweb.uw.edu.pl** to log in and explore the system.

How do I log in? The first time you log in to your USOS account you use the same login details as you did for your IRK system (Internetowa Rejestracja Kandydatów – that's the online admissions system you used to apply for a place in the programme).

In other words, your username will be the same as your PESEL number (this is the 11-digit personal identity number every Polish person is assigned at birth). You can change your password once you've logged in. Please choose a password that is secure but memorable.

Your syllabi. A syllabus is a detailed description of a course. USOS holds a syllabus for every course we offer. Click the name of a course and you will be provided with the information you need.

Important: your email address. USOS will ask you to provide a contact email address. Please provide an email address you actually check often. Your teachers may be using USOS to send you important course-related information.

How do I register for courses? You can only get credit for those courses you have officially enrolled in. To enrol in a course you need to register yourself using USOS. This can only be done at certain points in time, before the semester begins. This "rejestracja" period is announced on our website.



printable checklist

To help you keep track of the things you need to do we've prepared a handy checklist. Print this page and tick things off as you get them done. Add your own to do's if needed.

- ☐ Make sure you are registered as an USOS user
- ☐ Collect your Student ID Card [*legitymacja*]
- ☐ Collect your Student ID Card [*legitymacja*]
- ☐ Get library training [*szkolenie biblioteczne*]
- ☐ Get a BUW Library Card [*wyrobić kartę czytelnika BUW*]
- ☐ Get work safety training [*szkolenie BHP*]
- ☐ Get intellectual property rights training [*podstawy ochrony własności intelektualnej*]
- ☐ Sign the IA UW paperwork [*umowa o świadczenie usług edukacyjnych*]
- ☐ Decide if you want to sign up with a Warsaw-based medical clinic
- ☐ If so, sign up with a Warsaw-based medical clinic
- ☐ Choose and enrol in a Physical Education class

usosweb.uw.edu.pl

Hoża 69 (Room 331)

www.buw.uw.edu.pl

BUW (Dobra 26/36)

<http://kampus.come.uw.edu.pl>

Hoża 69

Hoża 69 (Room 331)

☐

☐

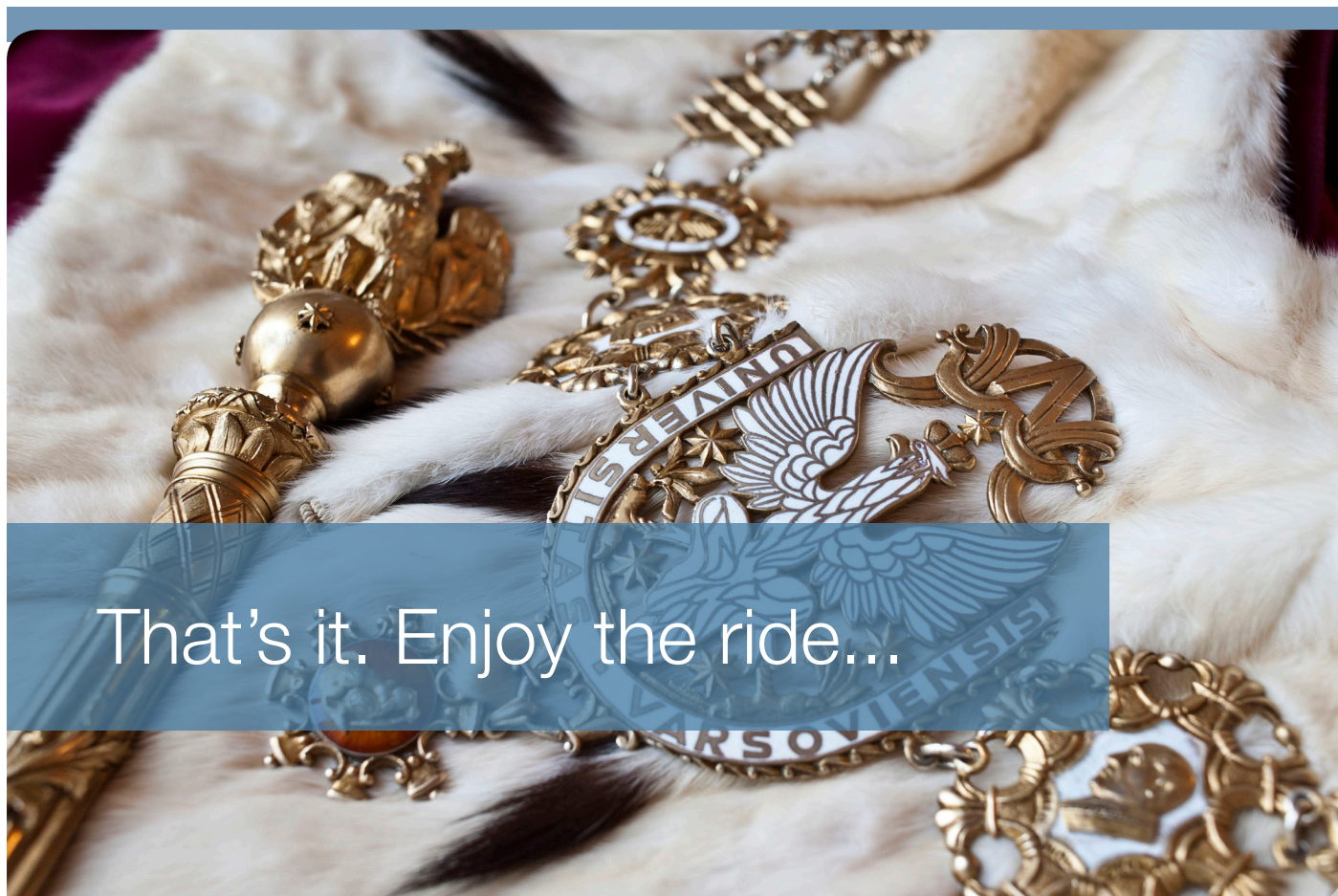
☐

☐

☐

☐

☐



That's it. Enjoy the ride...

image credits



image of Kasia Krupa: private photo, used with permission



image of Prof. Grzegorzewska: private photo, used with permission



image © **Patryk Korzeniecki**, Creative Commons 3.0 licence (Wikimedia Commons)



icon by **flaticon** (freepik.com)



icon by **Freepik** (freepik.com)



image by **poznaniak** (Wikimedia Commons)



icon by **flaticon** (freepik.com)



image by **flaticon** (freepik.com)



image © **Mirosław Kazimierczak** (Biuro Promocji Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego)



This Orientation Booklet was written and designed by **Piotr Szymczak**, with input from **Magdalena Kizeweter**. If you've found any errors or inaccuracies please send a message to piotrszymczak@uw.edu.pl

An up-to-date version of this booklet is always available as a pdf from the Institute website: ia.uw.edu.pl/images/booklets/BABooklet.pdf