Why did you choose the LCS M.A. program at CMU?

My time in the M.A. program was fast-paced and intensive, but it provided a depth of exposure to scholarly work that solidified those original inklings. In particular, I was attracted to the way that the program took theory and criticism seriously, placing it at the center of the curriculum. While that design encouraged methodological specificity, on the one hand, it also allowed for a lot of flexibility with regards to specific areas of study. This resulted in my being able to take a wide range of courses that were methodologically unified yet very broad in terms of subject matter, time period, etc. I put a lot of work into developing my critical vocabulary and learning to speak the language of literary scholarship, which paid off when I applied to Ph.D. programs. Eventually, though, I decided to stay at Carnegie Mellon for my Ph.D., bolstered by the relationships I had developed with faculty members, students, and staff.

How did your time in the LCS M.A. program prepare you for your Ph.D. and your current career?

I wanted a rigorous introduction to advanced scholarly work in the fields of literary and cultural studies that I could put towards my ultimate goal of placement in a Ph.D. program, and I definitely got that. What I had not counted on was gaining a lot of exposure to historical research as well, but that ended up serving me, in the end. A lot of the courses I took as an M.A. were historically focused, which caused me to rethink some of my own scholarly priorities and become interested in earlier periods. Now, in my own research and writing, I work as much from history as I do from literary texts, owing to the disciplinary flexibility that I developed while studying at Carnegie Mellon.