

ARKANSAS ENGLISH

Summer 2023

Newsletter for the Department of English at the University of Arkansas



Way to go, Graduates!!!

Congratulations to all of our undergraduate and graduate students in the English Department, some of whom are pictured above, who wrapped up their degree programs in December of 2022 and May of 2023.

Best wishes on the next stages of your careers!

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Thanks to Outgoing Chair Bill Quinn and Welcome to Incoming Chair Yajaira Padilla!



On July 1st, **Professor Bill Quinn** stepped down as our outgoing Chair of the English Department, and **Professor Yajaira Padilla** became our new Chair of the English Department.

Professor Quinn began serving as chair, taking over from **Professor Dorothy Stephens**, in the summer of 2019. Since then, he has skillfully led faculty, staff, and students through a range of administrative transitions and evolutions, facilitating countless department meetings in an always organized and respectful manner and meeting individually with department members on a daily basis. During his time as chair, he also coordinated and oversaw an external department review, approved efforts to invite and bring to campus numerous outside speakers, supervised the arrangement of a day-long department faculty retreat, and repeatedly dropped by department-sponsored events to show his support as an audience member.

We want to thank Professor Quinn for his wonderful dedication to the department during his time as chair, and we enthusiastically welcome Professor Padilla as she takes over that role!

New Faces in the Department



Tara Bielecki recently moved to NWA from Denver, Colorado, where she owned and operated a luxury wedding photography business. The search for a slower pace of life led her to Bella Vista, where she lives with her husband and min pin, Bella. She is enjoying the easy access to nature, and the many hiking trails that NWA offers. In her free time, Tara is a passionate equestrian, spending several days a week at the barn training in Hunter/Jumper. She has extensive experience in operations management, marketing, compensation and scheduling administration, as well as event planning. Tara is an ambitious professional who finds great purpose in helping others succeed. She is very much looking forward to serving the Department of English.

Kat Gray is an incoming Teaching Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Composition and Assistant Director of the Office of Rhetoric and Composition. They hold a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Writing from Virginia Tech. Their research considers cultural rhetorics of Whiteness; antiracist pedagogy, LMS UX, and design; and socially just technical communication. Kat hails originally from Birmingham, Alabama, and their hobbies include reading and writing speculative fiction, hiking, and indoor/outdoor skating. Kat has two furry children, Ivy, an 11-year-old Basset hound/labrador mix, and Beignet, a tiny 8-pound ginger cat who runs the entire house.





Jarvis Young is an Assistant Professor of African American Literature in the Program of African and African American Studies (AAST) and Department of English at the University of Arkansas. His research interests center on African American literature, and Afro-Diasporic writing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His dissertation, “The Black Polemical Essay: Toward a New Literary History of Early Afro-Diasporic Writing,” offers a crucial corrective to this literary history’s emphasis on the autobiographical genre by highlighting what he calls the Black polemical essay, a rich tradition inaugurated by Quobna Ottobah Cugoano’s 1787 *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery*. He plans to submit an article version of his first chapter titled, “The Black Polemical Essay: The Inception of an

Afro-Diasporic Essay Tradition,” to the *Journal of African American History* by the end of the summer. This project was influenced in part by a 2019 exhibition that he co-curated with colleagues at Johns Hopkins, called “Movements: Black Print Culture in the United States, 1773-1940,” which was put on display in the Milton S. Eisenhower Library. A native of Champaign, Illinois, he received his bachelor’s as well as his master’s in English from UIUC, in 2014 and in 2017, as well as a second master’s degree in English in 2021 from Johns Hopkins.

Check out these new department courses being offered Fall of 2023!

FRANKENSTEIN
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, FALL 2023
THU 12:30PM - 1:45PM
ENGL 3642
TOPICS IN LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND MEDICINE
FACULTY: DR. LISSETTE LOPEZ SZWICKY
LISSETTE@UARK.EDU

READ, WATCH, DISCUSS
Fiction, Film & Television, Graphic Novels, Children's Media, & Non-Fiction Essays on Biotech, AI, and scientific advances, old and new!

RESEARCH & CREATE
Reading and reflections journal
S.T.E.A.M. Infographic or Digital/Visual Short
Flexible Final Project Options
(all majors welcome)

Sample Readings:

- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, Annotated for Scientists, Engineers, and Creators of All Kinds. (MIT Press)
- Emily Aarseth, *Frankenstein's Cat: Cuddling Up to Biotech's Brave New Robots*.
- Kathryn Erlich, *Making the Monster: The Science Behind Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*.
- Jon Sweeney, *Frankenstein and the Assembler's Motor*.

Film & television including: *Frankenstein* (1931), *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957), *Penny Dreadful* (2014-16), *The Frankenstein Chronicles* (2015-17), *Ex Machina* (2014)

**CLIMATE FICTION
FALL 2023**

Professor M. Keith Booker
ENGL 5243, Special Topics
ENGL 6243, Seminar in Special Topics

An advanced survey of the field of climate fiction, with a special focus on novels inspired by the recognition of the threat posed by catastrophic climate change, but also including novels inspired by the rise of environmental consciousness from the 1950s forward. Modes will range from realistic explorations of existing climate situations to science fictional explorations of possible future crises and solutions. We will also supplement our reading of novels with viewings of several films that address the topic of climate change in various ways.

Faculty Spotlight: Professor and Director of Rhetoric and Composition Megan McIntyre



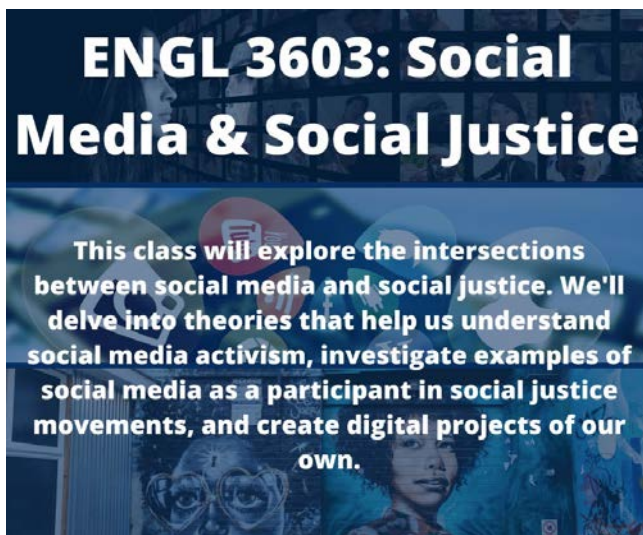
*This fall, **Professor Megan McIntyre** begins her second year as the Director of Rhetoric and Composition for the Department of English. In this role, she trains all of our incoming graduate instructors and provides them with outstanding guidance and support. She also teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses focused on topics related to her areas of research: antiracist writing programs, postpedagogy, and social media. She is now starting her fifth year as a CCCC Feminist Caucus Co-chair.*

What's been an interesting aspect of transitioning from Sonoma State University (in California) to the U of A?

The weather! When I got here from California, it was late June and so, so hot. I remember chatting with someone that first week who, when I told him I wasn't used to the heat anymore (after 4 years in California and 3 years in New Hampshire before that), said, "Give it an hour and the weather will change. You'll have all four seasons in the same week." I thought he was joking, but he wasn't at all. The weather here is wild! In terms of academic things, though, the chance to work with such a wonderful group of MA, MFA, and PhD students has been my favorite part. At Sonoma State, I got to work with some truly lovely MA students, but I've loved working with all the TAs this year.

I know you've been incredibly busy this year in your role as the English Department's Director of Rhetoric and Composition. What accomplishment or experience (in that role) are you most proud of?

LewEllyn and I worked hard (with the amazing help of Taylor Weeks) on setting up a pedagogy course and spring pedagogy workshops that would support the new folks as they transitioned into their new roles as teachers and graduate students at the U of A, and I'm really proud of how the class and workshops turned out this year. I'm also so, so proud to say that our failure rate in Comp 1 is lowest in at least a decade. That's a testament to our TAs and instructors and our overall commitment to helping our first-year students succeed.



*Flyer for Professor McIntyre's
Spring '23 Undergraduate Course*

What's been your most memorable teaching moment this year?

In the fall pedagogy class, it was the range, breadth, and depth of the questions that folks asked almost from the first day. I remember noticing that the new TAs asked amazing questions at Orientation, but there was a class meeting in week 4, I think, where our entire class period was really excellent questions inspired by folks' experiences and the readings and discussions of those questions. We didn't

get to any of the things in my lesson plan for that class, and it was my favorite class the whole semester. I'll also always remember getting to read both the grad students' and my undergrads' final projects in ENGL 3603 this spring, which were thoughtful, inventive, and so, so smart. Honestly, though, that's often my favorite part of any class.



Professor McIntyre Leading a Spring 2023 Workshop for Graduate Instructors, "Teaching Comp 2: Teaching Genre"

What have you been up to (professionally speaking) outside of your teaching and administrative work on campus? Any academic conferences you recommend?

I do a lot of work with the Conference on College Composition and Communication, where I've been co-chairing the Feminist Caucus for the last four years. CCCC is enormous and can be totally overwhelming, but there's still so much I love about it, particularly the folks I get to learn from when I'm there. I've also been working on a few major projects: with Dr. Fernandes and another collaborator (the awesome Emily Brier from Western Carolina University), I've been working on a project about alternative assessments like grading contracts. And I've been hard at work on my book, which is a look at the history of composition, rhetoric, and writing studies as a discipline and how the discipline should acknowledge and build on the contributions of marginalized scholars, advocates, and activists, particularly those from the 1960s.

What has been the most exciting (or fun) activity you've done in Fayetteville to date?

Not exactly in Fayetteville, but my favorite thing I've done so far was hiking in Devil's Den last fall. It's GORGEOUS, and I had the best time.

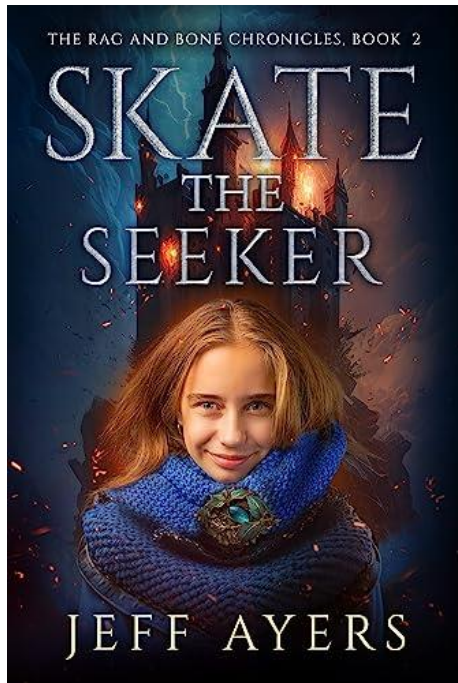
What is a book or film you recommend others check out? Why?

I just finished re-reading *The Yellow House* for I think the third time. It's truly amazing, both as a memoir and a history of sorts about home, family, racism, poverty, and the life and history of New Orleans. It's beautiful and heartbreaking. I love it so much.

What is one thing you are looking forward to in the coming academic year?

The amazing addition of our new Assistant Director, Kat Gray. Kat's great, and they're so excited to join us. I feel so lucky that they'll be here with us next year.

Alumni Updates (B.A., M.A., M.F.A., Ph.D.)



Rory Abraham (B.A. '14): Rory got a job teaching middle school literacy and science in Lead Hill, AR.

Madison Atkinson (B.A. '21): Madison is now a high school English teacher, working toward her Master's in Teaching (M.A.T.) at Centenary College in Shreveport, LA.

Jeff Ayers (B.A. in English '11; M.A.T. '12): Jeff's next book, *Skate the Seeker*, is scheduled to be published by Thinklings Books on September 12, 2023, in paperback and ebook formats. This will be a sequel to the first book, *Skate the Thief*.

Christina Rose Conrad (B.A. '98; J.D. '01): Christina was recently promoted to Vice President of Employment Law & Communications for FedEx Freight. Christina oversees a team of lawyers, a team of compliance professionals, and a

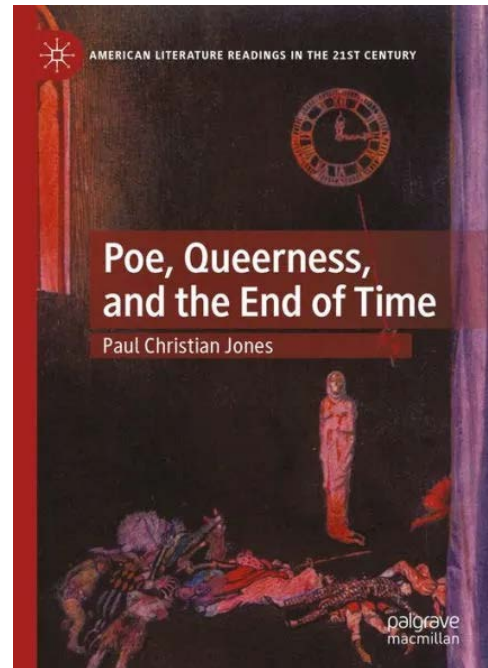
team responsible for internal and external communications for her company of about 45,000 employees in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

Neil Covey (B.A. in English and a B.A. in Economics '80; M.A. in English '84): Neil also has a Ph.D. in English from Indiana University (1991). He is happy to report he's still alive and doesn't have that many complaints.

Paul Jones (B.A. '91; M.A. '94): Paul is a professor of English at Ohio University. His most recent monograph, *Poe, Queerness, and the End of Time*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2022.

Ryan Kerr (B.A. '16): Ryan is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Florida. Ryan's publications from last year are:

- "(Re)Viewing Queer Diasporas: *Happy Together* and New National Allegories of Hong Kong," *Rising Asia* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2022): 383-406.
- "James Joyce, Eugene Stratton, and Spectrality: The Absent Presence of Racial Politics in *Ulysses*," *James Joyce Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (Winter 2022): 231-246.



Jackie Lawrence (M.A. '14): Jackie was promoted from Director I of Inclusion to Director II at J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc. in Lowell, AR. She also recently finished a nation-wide speaking engagement on the Business Case for Inclusion, hitting four cities and over 1,700 people.

Andrew Lucas (B.A. '85): Andy officially retired for a second time after 44 years of government service. Andy served in the U.S. Army for 27 years, retiring in 2005 as a Lieutenant Colonel. From there he embarked on a career as a government contractor that culminated in Stuttgart, Germany, supporting the U.S. European Command for the past two years. Andy and his wife, Carla (Huffman) Lucas, Class of 87/BSN University of Kentucky, will reside in Louisville, KY, where Andy will provide a dot of Razorback Red in a sea of UK blue.

Adrienne Kincaid Murphy (B.A. '02; J.D. '05): As part of a nationwide expansion, Adrienne opened Slater Slater Schulman LLP's Arkansas office in September 2022. Slater Slater Schulman is a full-service law firm with over 40 years of experience representing survivors of catastrophic

and traumatic events. Adrienne’s current focus is related to the [Arkansas Legislature's recent passage of The Justice for Vulnerable Victims of Sexual Abuse Act.](#)

James E. O’Neal (B.A. ’69): James is a septuagenarian (having recently celebrated his 76th birthday) who graduated with a B.A. degree in 1969. It’s been almost a decade since he was employed on a full-time basis, so he doesn’t have any recent “job-related” accomplishments to report. Likewise, the pandemic and its aftermath have limited new “accomplishments” within the past six to twelve months. However, he was quite active in the field of publications and journalism until early 2020, traveling to locales both here and abroad on almost a monthly basis to report on various broadcast-related conferences, symposia, trade shows and similar events.

Although his first thoughts on graduating centered on pursuing a career in technical writing, this didn’t materialize. He supported himself through employment in the field of television engineering, eventually pursuing formal engineering studies and receiving a degree in that discipline in 1984. In 2005, after a career of nearly 37 years in broadcast engineering, he retired and almost immediately embarked on a second career in publications, being hired as technology editor by a nationally distributed magazine (*TV Technology*). After involvement in this field for nearly a decade (2014), he retreated to part-time duties, serving as a technical advisor and very frequent contributor to that publication, and also contributing broadcast-related articles to other periodicals. He is a member of three professional societies and serves on a voluntary basis as the editor-in-chief of a broadcast-sector quarterly (*Broadcast Technology*) published by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). In addition, he serves as an associate editor of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE) monthly *Imaging Journal*. He also authored a chapter on high-frequency propagation in the most recent edition of the *National Association of Broadcasters’ Engineering Handbook*.

In 2019, James was honored by being elevated to Life Fellow status by the SMPTE organization, and in 2021 was similarly elevated to Life Senior Member status by the IEEE.

Rebecca Quoss-Moore (M.A. ’11; Ph.D. ’16): Rebecca, Assistant Professor of Early Modern Literature with the Department of English at the University of Oklahoma, was given the College of Liberal Arts award for Outstanding Work for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, largely for her work as President of the 2SLGBTQIA+ Faculty and Staff Association.

Cherri Randall (M.F.A. '04; Ph.D. '08): Cherri is still publishing short works and working on a novel.

Macie Reynolds (B.A. '19): In June 2022, Macie began working as the Assistant Editor of E-Commerce & SEO for *The Pioneer Woman Magazine* at Hearst Magazines in New York City.

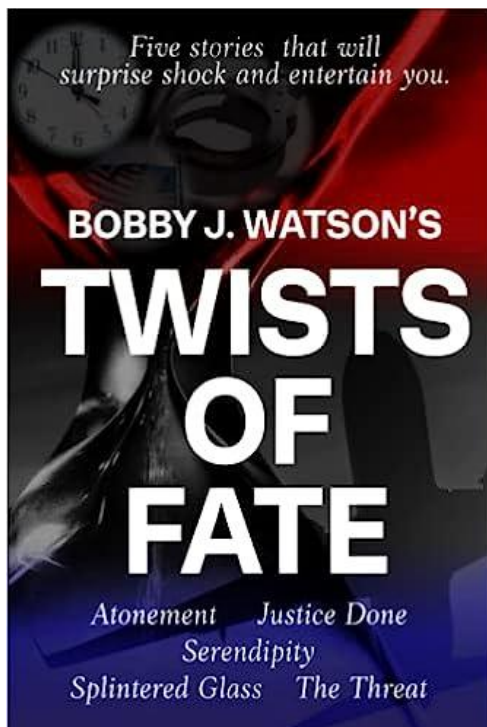
Hiluard G. (Buddy) Rogers (B.A. '70): Buddy also received his A.M. in English at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1971 and his Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of Texas-Austin in 1977. His poem "Epistemology of a Photograph" was published February, 2022, in *The Ekphrastic Review*.

Mary Katherine Shapiro (B.A. in English and Journalism '21): Mary Katherine has accepted a new job as a Multi-Platform Journalist with *Community Impact Newspaper* in Frisco, Texas. In this role, she puts together daily newsletters and writes sponsored content.

Devin Shepherd (M.A. '22): Devin is currently working for a nonprofit organization, the Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance, as a website specialist.

Mary Ann Stafford (M.A. in English '76; Ed.D. in Secondary Education '85): Mary Ann taught English, Humanities and Art at Pine Bluff High School from 1969 - 1985 and became Asst. Principal after that for 5 years; she then moved to the Arkansas Department of Education as Staff Development Coordinator. She retired in 1993. Since then she has published two books of poetry: *Then and Now* (2007) and *On My Way* (2020); also *The Argenta National Historic District* (drawings of 25 structures plus historic and architectural facts). She co-authored two books with her husband, Lyle Stafford, and one with her son, Mike, entitled *Of the Greatest Generation* in 2017. She recently celebrated her 90th birthday and she keeps active by volunteering, painting and drawing, facilitating grief support groups, playing the piano for shut-ins, and exercising.

W.Z. (Zach) Turner (B.A. '20): Zach completed his M.F.A. in Creative Writing with an emphasis in Poetry at Boston University with the approval of his thesis, "What is Needful," and he also was awarded the Robert Pinsky Global Fellowship, which he completed in Scotland and France. He has since published four poems, "Dissonant Summer Lament," "Sonnet on the Saline," "Flying Fish," and "Scotch Restickable," in *Wrongdoing Magazine*, *Fresh Words Magazine*, and *Quarterly*; and he has published four photos, "Mary, What Has Become of Us," "I'll Take Comfort Wherever I Can Get It," "This Wretched Flesh," and "SON," in *Wrongdoing Magazine* and *Lavender Bones*. Zach now teaches at Eagle Hill School in Hardwick, Mass.



Bobby Watson (B.A. in English and History '73): Bobby is a retired software consultant. He has written stories for several years as a hobby and friends often encouraged him to publish the stories. Recently, he published his first book, a collection of five crime novellas titled *Twists of Fate* that is available on Amazon. Bobby has fond memories of his time at U of A and comes back to walk the campus and see the many changes whenever he has the opportunity.

Christina M. Wells (M.A. '98): Christina also has a Ph.D. in English from the University of Maryland (2004). In the fall, Christina got nominated for a Pushcart Prize for her essay "Talking About Buffalo With the Dead." It's found in *Real Women Write: Seeing Through Their Eyes*, which is a book edited by Susan Schoch for Story Circle Network. Christina also was a finalist for the 2022

Conger Beasley, Jr. Award for Nonfiction (sponsored by *New Letters*).

Sara West (Ph.D. '18): Sara will be moving to a position as Assistant Professor in Writing Studies at Middle Tennessee State University.

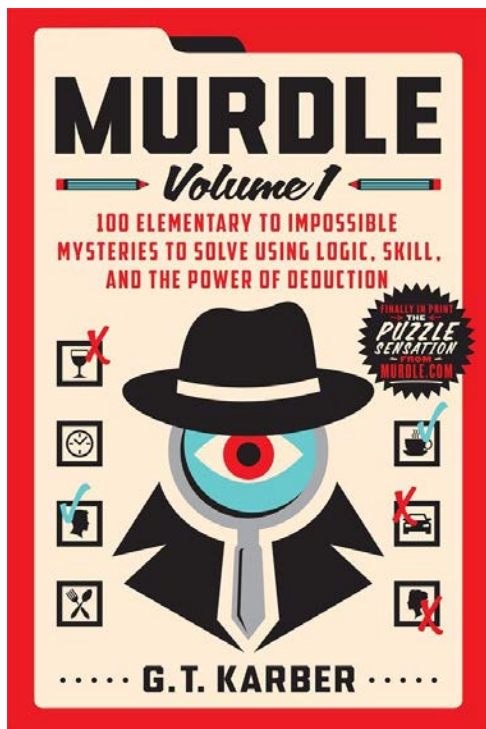
Alumni Spotlights

Thanks to these four alumni who responded to our spotlight questions for the newsletter!

Greg Karber (B.A. in English with emphases in Creative Writing and Mathematics '09), Creator of Murdle.com and Author of Murdle

What professional accomplishment are you most proud of since graduating from the U of A?

Honestly, the one I just completed, which is writing and releasing this three-volume series of murder mystery puzzle books based on my online game at Murdle.com. I'm also finishing up a horror-comedy musical I've co-written and co-directed, but it's not out yet, so I'll say *Murdle* for now.



First Volume of Karber's
Murder Mystery Puzzle Book Series

What is your best memory of taking a course and/or working with a professor in our Department of English?

I loved studying abroad (and drinking) in Ireland with Skip Hays or studying theater in London with Joe Candido. (I owe them both for favors that I won't mention here.) I'll be forever grateful for a class I took with the great Ellen Gilchrist. I remember she once said one of the hardest things to write was a character walking across a room. There's something to that.

What do you consider to be the most beautiful spot in Arkansas? Why?

It's hard to pick from so many in a beautiful state. But the drive back and forth from Fort Smith to Fayetteville in the fall, when the leaves were changing, never failed to leave an impression on me.

What is your favorite book and/or movie? Why?

My favorite books and movies are always changing. I love Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, a whodunit in an Italian abbey in the 1300s. And I just read Isaac Deutscher's three-volume biography of Leon Trotsky, which was so compelling and moving. Both of them take you into a different world, not just in the world, but in the mind, too. They're both books about people who think very differently than we're used to thinking, and to me, that's the fullest, most satisfying kind of escapism.

What advice would you give to our current English students?

Write to be read, so look for places where people are reading. Write a column for *The Arkansas Traveler*. Or write a play for the theater department. Come up with new places and new ways to write, but write for your friends first! You don't know what the public might like but you do know what your friends like. Write about what you love more than anyone else in the world, and work to share that love with others.

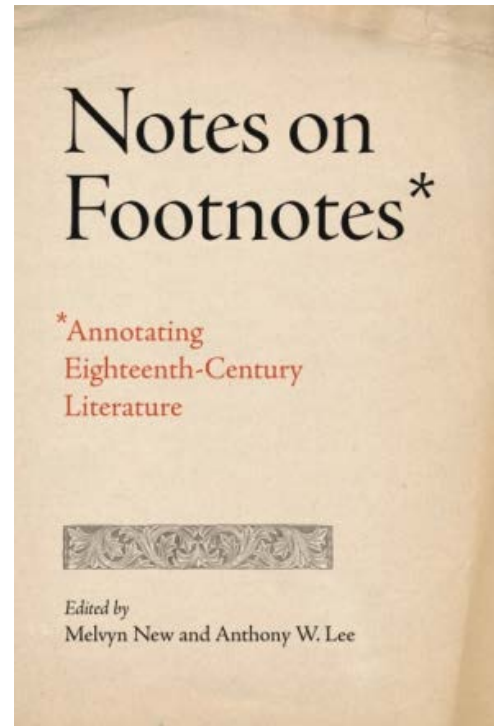


Greg Karber in Sleuth Mode

Anthony Lee (Ph.D. '01), Visiting Lecturer, Department of English and World Languages, Arkansas Tech University

What professional accomplishment are you most proud of since graduating from the U of A?

There are two. I was fortunate in the support that my academic employments (while teaching at six different universities or colleges, in Kentucky, Arkansas, Maryland, and Washington D.C.) have supported and, at times, funded my scholarly endeavors. Somehow, since 2005, I have managed to publish eight books, some forty-five peer-reviewed papers and chapters, and more reviews and conference papers than I can honestly remember. Today, as I look back on thirty years of teaching and eighteen years of publication, I find myself in awe, just as, to compare great things to small, Othello expressed when surveying his career before the Venetian senators, where he marveled at “the battles, sieges, fortunes that I have past.” In terms of publication, I am most proud of giving a talk on Samuel Johnson and *Rambler 2* at the Library of Congress (which was later published in *Eighteenth-Century Intelligencer*), my latest book, co-edited with Sterne expert Melvin New, *Notes on Footnotes*, and my forthcoming *The Annotated Rambler*.



*Lee's Most Recently Co-edited Book
Notes on Footnotes (2022)*

Setting aside all this vanity, the ultimate answer to the question of what I am most proud of since leaving UA-Fayetteville, is this: discovering and practicing the magic of teaching. I have taught in many geographical areas with varying student populations. Somehow, I have managed to attempt and sustain a delicious rapprochement with most of the students in my classrooms. There is no better feeling, I have found, than leaving a successful class, where the students were engaged, I was passionate, and where I learned much from my contact with people mostly younger than me. As much as I have published and spoken professionally, my relationships with students have been vital, sustaining, and refreshing to my life. I am most grateful to my former students. Some of the best were at Fayetteville.

What is your best memory of taking a course and/or working with a professor in our Department of English?

I was fortunate to be at U of AR at a time when a dynamic cluster of professors practiced their craft. Keith Booker taught me much about theory; I was greatly informed about Shakespeare by Joseph Candido and Spenser by Dot Stephens. My greatest benefactor, in more ways than one, was my beloved Brian Wilkie. He chose me to be a teaching assistant for his two-semester offering, World Literature, from antiquity to the twentieth century. This gave me a springboard to teaching my own World Lit classes—something highly prized at that time by graduate students. He asked me to live in his house and look after things while he and his wife went on vacation. Dr. Wilkie had an immense CD collection, ranging from Wagner to the Beatles. This range was symbolic of his scholarly interests, which extended from Virgil to Blake (and more). Brian was a brilliant, soft-spoken man, and his death leaves a chasm in my life and, I am sure, that of many others.

What do you consider to be the most beautiful spot in Arkansas? Why?

I was living in Fayetteville when I discovered Devil's Den—magnificent. Where I live now, at the foot of Dardanelle Rock, with Mt. Nebo and the Arkansas River at hand, must take the prize. However, I challenge Fayetteville residents to drive over to Lake Leatherwood and look for the dusty road that leads to a tree decorated by 100 + tennis shoes. Perhaps not the most beautiful site in the state, but one yet worth the trip. Bring your own spare shoe and join the party!

What is your favorite book and/or movie? Why?

I am hesitant to answer this question with any pretense to authority. I used to say, well of course, they have to be *War and Peace* and *Apocalypse Now* (based upon Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*). But as I grow older, and as my experience widens, I find questions such as this pesty and irrelevant. I will say that very recently I have been delving into William Blake. I used to view his visionary works, such as the *Four Zoas* or *Milton*, as maddingly opaque, like *Finnegans Wake*. But I now must acknowledge the breadth and extent of Blake's achievement. He was right about so many things, personal and political. And he conveyed his revolutionary ideas in a form that challenges, nay, demands, readerly involvement to the extent that the attentive reader is likely to be absorbed into and transformed, radically, by the energetic genius of this great poet and artist.

What advice would you give to our current English students?

I like this question. To answer it is to acknowledge the tremendous body of hits delivered to English departments and the humanities in general in recent years. After the Great Recession of 2008, and the consequent economic and political instabilities that ensued, I saw the University of Maryland's English department student population drop by 20%. This was not an isolated phenomenon. Yet, at that time, as Program Director of the English and Humanities with University of Maryland University College, I conducted program reviews that yielded the truth that employers desire people who are familiar with critical thinking (thinking outside the box), information literacy, good writing and communication skills, and flexibility. In a word, an English major. Most colleges and universities have done a poor job of promoting this knowledge to the public.



Tony Lee

Listen. This is the most important thing I can say to students of English and the humanities: WE NEED YOU! Without careful readers and writers such as you, the treasures of the past, Homer, Sappho, Aquinas, Michelangelo, Milton, Johnson, Boswell, Blake, Coleridge, Jane Austen, T.S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf, to name but a few, will wither and die in our nation's consciousness. In a moment of deep bitterness and disillusionment, Ezra Pound wrote of Western civilization's collapse in the wake of WW1, "For two gross of broken statues, / For a few thousand battered books," countless young men and women died. Perhaps, given the seemingly overwhelming problems we collectively face, you might be tempted to indulge Pound's cynicism. Don't. We need a new generation of thinkers and writers to guide, to lead, us forward, despite the many pressing issues we face. WE NEED YOU! More than ever, we need people thoughtfully studying English and world literature to rise and lead us forward. Read Blake. Read Coleridge. Read Samuel Johnson. Read Donne and Jonson. Read George Eliot. Read H. D. Read Hurston. Read Achebe. READ EVERYTHING! This is your charge. Read, reflect, discuss, write. Grow into the best possible person you can be and then share your Self with your family, your community, your world. We need you, and you need each other, and the world needs us all. Keep the faith.

Leighann Thone (formerly Dicks) (M.A. '14), Research Analyst, Kansas Legislative Research Department



Leighann Thone with Ahsoka, enjoying Mount Nebo in Leighann's hometown of Dardanelle

What professional accomplishment are you most proud of since graduating from the U of A?

I finished my Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition at the University of Kansas in May 2020! Given the time, it was strange and surreal, but many years of hard work culminated in my dissertation defense on Zoom (a benefit to defending at home – I immediately took an excellent nap with my dog afterward). Though I am no longer working in academia, I use the skills I learned in graduate school in my work every single day.

What is your best memory of taking a course and/or working with a professor in our Department of English?

I took a course in Literacy and Community from Dr. David Jolliffe, which really opened up my eyes to the ways that studying rhetoric could provide a place for me to explore my more niche pop culture interests. That class paved the way for me to pursue my Ph.D. in rhetoric and gave me a great foundation to start from! I also feel grateful to have worked with the brilliant Dr. Lisa Hinrichsen – I always felt a burst of motivation after meeting with her, and her classes were so fascinating – I still often think about some of the books and discussions we had in the South and Sexuality course.

What do you consider to be the most beautiful spot in Arkansas? Why?

I grew up visiting my maternal grandparents almost every Sunday in Jerusalem, Arkansas, and most trips involved a few hours wheeling around the lovely section of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest north of there. I learned to drive in an old, beat-up Ford Bronco my grandpa

bought just for our adventures (standard transmission, of course – don't ask me to drive one today, though). Countless hours exploring those roads, wading Brock Creek (even when it was far too cold), and hearing about my grandpa's childhood growing up there makes it the most beautiful place to me.

What is your favorite book and/or movie? Why?

Whew, what a hard question! Though I haven't read it in a while, I still consider *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath to be my favorite book. I read it when I was 18 and it resonated so deeply with me; it was one of the first books that wouldn't let me go for a long while after reading it and I think it solidified my desire to study literature before I even got to college. My favorite movie is much less highbrow – *Superbad*. It came out in 2007 just as my Senior year of high school was about to begin, and many of us went to see it together the night before our first day. That memory is good enough, but the movie also never fails to make me laugh. I'm realizing now that I encountered both of these pieces of media in the same year – what a formative time!



News Clip: Thone Staffing a Committee during a Session of the Kansas Legislature

What advice would you give to our current English students?

First, enjoy your time at the U of A! I loved my time living in Fayetteville and being a student. Second, I think it's important to keep an open mind as you study and plan for the future. Take advantage of the resources at the U of A, don't be afraid to explore opportunities outside of your comfort zone, and use them to learn more about yourself and what you want for your future. Finally, if you are a Ph.D. student, don't save the longest books on your doctoral exam list for last – not that I know this from experience, or anything. 😊

Tobias Wray (M.F.A. '12), Director of Creative Writing and Assistant Professor of English, University of Central Oklahoma



Toby Wray

What professional accomplishment are you most proud of since graduating from the U of A?

A retired teacher friend of mine says that teaching in the Humanities is good karma work because the students who learn something from us learn something about being human. I started teaching at UA and have been in one classroom or another ever since. I am most proud to see my students find their way, sometimes to

publishing, or to grad programs, or to good jobs. But I am equally excited when they tell me they are simply living life beyond college, using the skills they gained in our program to live better. One significant gift of being an educator is that I get to take pride in all these accomplishments, seeing them ripple out from the classroom.

What is your best memory of taking a course and/or working with a professor in our Department of English?

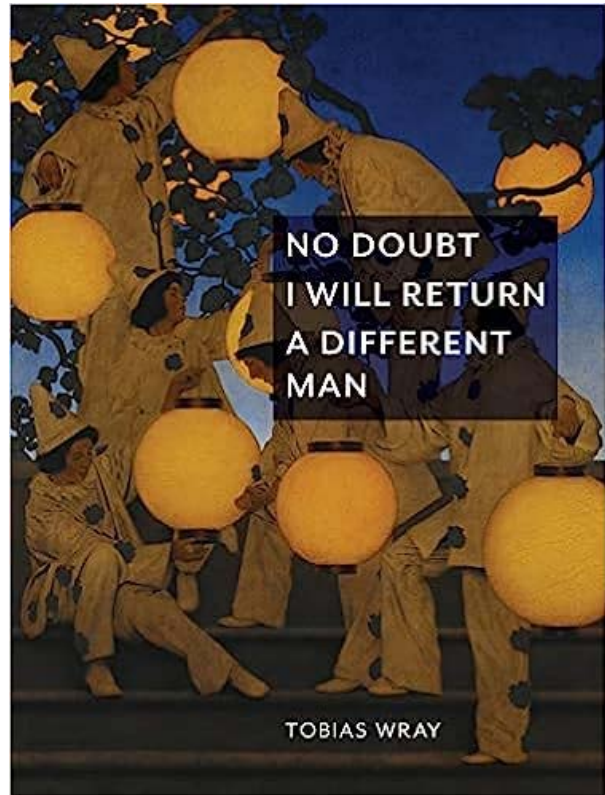
Among my fond memories of working with the wonderful UA faculty, I think often of a small graduate seminar with Geoff Brock that focused exclusively on translations of Ovid. We would sometimes meet off-campus and our conversations about certain lines, certain ideas would wander into fantastic directions that, I believe, inspired every poet who took that class to write their own poems of metamorphosis and exile.

Opportunities with mentors like this are everything to a young student of writing. I am lucky to have found such good mentors in the M.F.A. program.

What do you consider to be the most beautiful spot in Arkansas? Why?

Arkansas is certainly in the running for most beautiful state I've ever seen (and I've lived in over a dozen now). I grew up hiking the Ozarks as a kid, visiting family there each summer. Seven Hollows trail, tucked between the Ouachitas and the Ozarks, was a favorite back then, though I was often at Devil's Den when I lived in Fayetteville.

I also love Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and visit certain works every chance I get. One of my favorite paintings of theirs, Maxfield Parrish's *The Lantern Bearers*, became the cover art for my first book, *No Doubt I Will Return a Different Man*. I am drawn to anything that has a preternatural glow, a light that seems to come from somewhere beyond the familiar surface. I think Arkansas holds a lot of that kind of light. It's easy to find if you're looking for it.



Wray's Most Recent Book of Poetry, No Doubt I Will Return a Different Man (2021)

What is your favorite book and/or movie? Why?

I'm not sure I have a favorite book or movie, maybe because I am easily wonderstruck and bring a certain magpie-like attention to what I consume. I love individual poems for this reason, how lovely it is to drift from poem to poem in an anthology or journal. But then there are works that demand a certain patience. A few years ago, I had an incredible book club with colleagues where we slowly read *Moby-Dick* over many months. Taking one's time is a sure way to deepen appreciation. But then, I also keep pushing Lauren Groff's *Matrix* onto friends since reading it in a rapturous gush last summer.

A favorite book is possibly also one you cannot stop thinking about. A pal recommended Anthony Veasna So's *Afterparties*, a collection of loosely linked short stories about the Cambodian-American experience, which has had that effect on me. The books I keep assigning

to my students probably fall in the category of something like favorites, too: Victoria Chang’s *Obit* and Tommy Pico’s *Nature Poem* are among recent repeats.



Wray Giving a Public Reading of His Poetry

But I think anthologies are a great way to encounter poems worth hanging on to. A poem of mine appears in the recent [*Queer Nature anthology*](#), but that book is so rich in queer perspective and wonder I can’t help but rec it here. It brought me back to James Schuyler and CA Conrad, among many others.

What advice would you give to our current English students?

Believe in your process. The playfulness and curiosity you lend to a process is everything, all the joy and possibility you will get out of this work. Lean into it, beat by beat. Try everything, be a little wild in

your creative choices, and don’t worry about how it ends—worry is the antithesis of belief, after all. Believe that liking an idea is enough to see it through to whatever end.

Program Updates

News from the Brown Chair in English Literacy and the Community Literacies Collaboratory

- This spring, the [Community Literacies Collaboratory](#), launched in 2022 by **Professor Eric Darnell Pritchard** in their role as the Brown Chair in English Literacy, received a significant number of applications for its second cycle of community literacies grants, and the recipients will be announced soon.
- In March, the CLC hosted its second Possibilities Hub seminar, titled “Coalitional Literacies: Strategies for Building Social Justice Initiatives Across Institutions.”

- In April, the CLC hosted its second annual National Poetry Month as well as a two-day “Composing Kinship: Poetics and Community” event, which included both a roundtable and a workshop.
- Also in April, the Brown Chair and Community Literacies Collaboratory co-sponsored a visit to Northwest Arkansas by Susan Burton, founder of A New Way of Life Reentry Project. (Read more about this event on p. 31.)
- Finally, the CLC celebrated its first birthday on May 6!

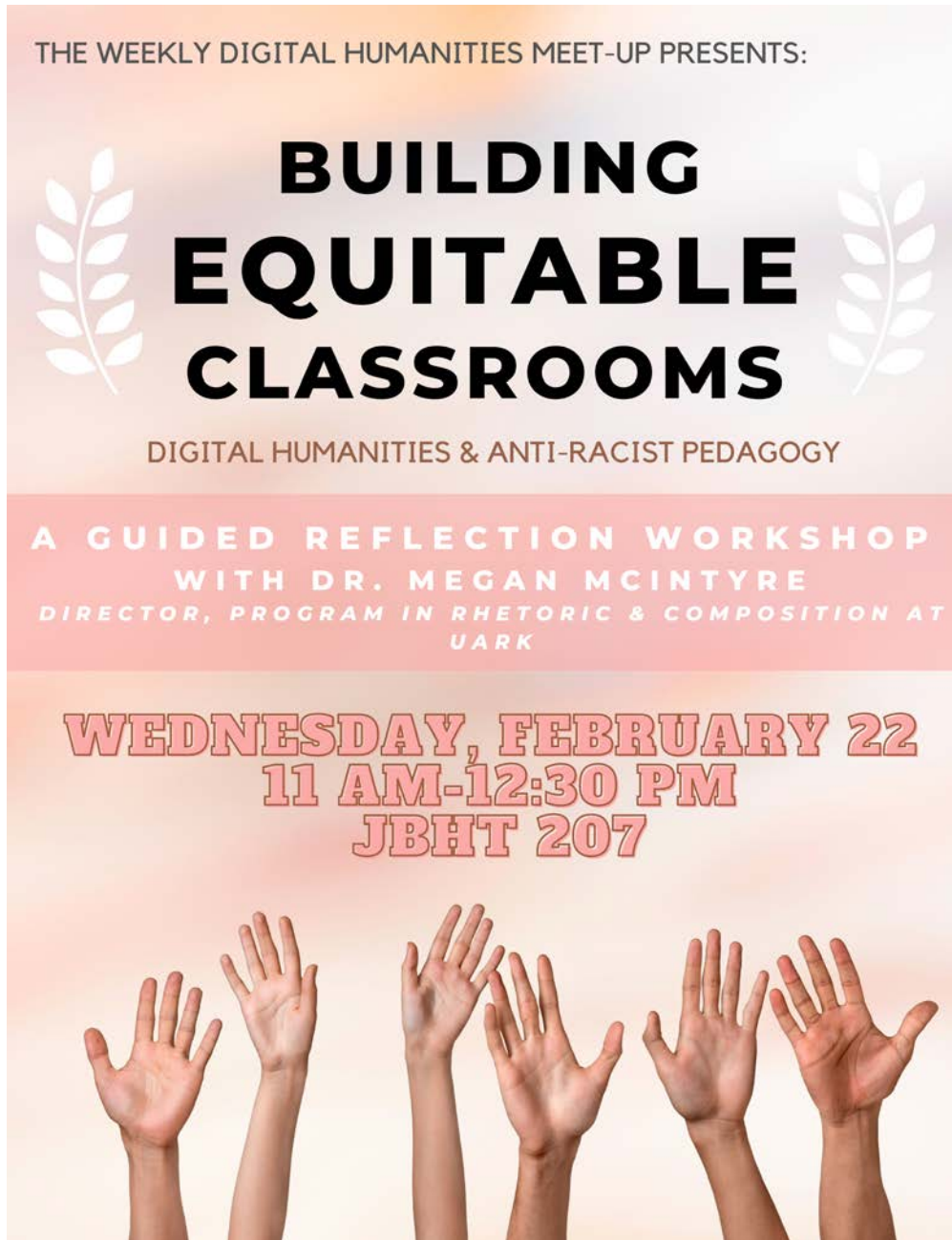


Flyer by M.F.A. Student Jami Padgett, Graduate Assistant for the CLC and Brown Chair in English Literacy

News from the Program in Rhetoric and Composition

- **Professor Kat Gray** will be joining the Program in Rhetoric and Composition this summer as an Assistant Director. (We’re thrilled!)
- **Nik Robbins** joined us, too, as an admin. (So glad he’s here!)
- More students passed 1013 than have in recent memory; the PRC’s failure and withdrawal rate in ENGL 1013 was only 11% this year.
- The PRC offered 6 professional development sessions this year.
- The PRC has revised and simplified the grading contract and Comp 2 curriculum.
- The PRC is continuing to develop additional Global Campus classes, including ENGL 4003, for online degree students.
- **Professor Megan McIntyre** and **Professor Adam Pope** were recently selected as 2023-2024 Connor Faculty Fellows.

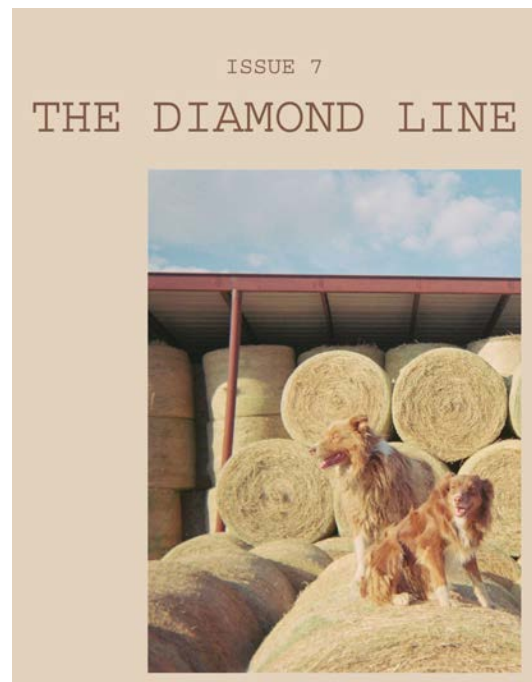
- The PRC is looking forward to Orientation (August 14-18) and the 30 or so new TAs joining us this coming year.



Pictured above: Flyer for a spring workshop led by Professor McIntyre. The event was organized by World Languages & Digital Humanities Studio Researcher Chy'Na Nellon, who teaches for the Program in Rhetoric and Composition and is a doctoral student in the Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies Program.

News from the Program in Creative Writing and Translation

- At the beginning of the year, M.F.A. alumni and poets **Tobias Wray ('12)** and **J. Bailey Hutchinson ('19)** were awarded Creative Writing Fellowships of \$25,000 each by the National Endowment for the Arts.
- In April, the **2022-2023 Walton Visiting Writer in Poetry, Jane Hirshfield**, gave a free public reading of her work at the Janelle Y. Hembree Alumni House on campus.
- Also in April, Kyle Kellams at KUAF interviewed **Professor Padma Viswanathan** and **author Uchenna Awoke** about *The Arkansas International's Writers-At-Risk Residency Program*. Uchenna Awoke is a fiction writer from Nsukka, Nigeria, and is the program's inaugural author. You can listen to the interview [here](#).
- In April, as well, alum **Lee Durkee's (M.F.A. '91)** new book, *Stalking Shakespeare: A Memoir of Madness, Murder, and My Search for the Poet Beneath the Paint*, was favorably reviewed in *The New York Times*.
- In May, the **2022-23 Walton Visiting Writer in Fiction, novelist René Steinke**, gave a free public reading of her work at the Home Economics Auditorium on campus.
- Likewise in May, **Isabella Sotlar**, a sophomore honors English major concentrating in creative writing with a minor in Italian, was awarded the undergraduate Felix Christopher McKean Memorial Award for her poem "Elijah-Raised in the Fire."
- Finally, at the end of the spring semester, *The Diamond Line*, the undergraduate literary magazine written and published by students in **Professor Jane Blunski's** Literary Magazine Production course, released its Issue #7.



Uchenna Awoke, inaugural author in the Arkansas International's Writers-at-Risk Residency Program; cover of The Diamond Line's Issue #7.

News from the Graduate Program in English (M.A. and Ph.D. Programs)

- Alum **Eddie Ardeneaux (Ph.D. '16)** was promoted to Associate Professor with the English Department at the University of the Ozarks. In addition, both Eddie and alum **Brian Hardman (Ph.D. '06)** were awarded the Bagwell Outstanding Faculty Award at the University of the Ozarks.
- Recent graduate **David Berg (M.A. '23)** will be starting law school at the University of Michigan this fall.
- Alum **Eric Bontempo (M.A. '17)**, who defended his dissertation this spring at UNC-Chapel Hill (*Reverent Romanticism: Anthologizing Romantic Poetry in Victorian Devotional Literature*), has accepted a tenure-track position at Abilene Christian University.
- Alum **Aaron East (M.A. '21)** has started a new job as Proposal Coordinator at ERS Corp.
- Alum **Nathan Fayard (Ph.D. '19)** has been hired as an assistant professor of English at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana.
- Ph.D. candidate **Sharon Fox** is the new Dean of Communication and Arts at NorthWest Arkansas Community College.
- Alum **Amy Hodges (Ph.D. '12)** had her book chapter "Mapping Transnational Institutions: Connections between WAC/WID and Qatar's Engineering Industry," published in the edited collection *Toward a Transnational University: WAC/WID Across Borders of Language, Nation, and Discipline*.
- Alum **Sarah Hurst (M.A. '22)**, who has been hired for the position of English Teacher with Bentonville High School.

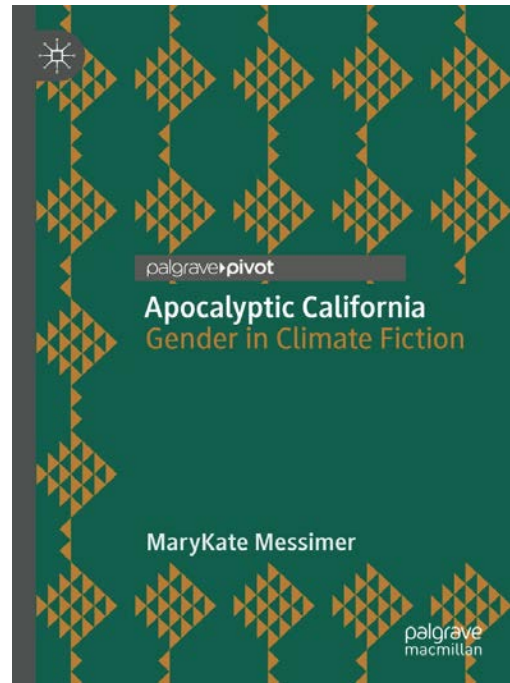


Eric Bontempo



Sarah Hurst

- Ph.D. candidate **Samantha Meeks** has been hired by Arkansas Tech University as their new Coordinator of Graduate Recruitment. In addition, she received the Arkansas Council for Women in Higher Education's Rising Star Award.
- Alum **MaryKate Messimer's (Ph.D. '19)** book *Apocalyptic California: Gender in Climate Fiction* has been released by Palgrave Macmillan.
- Alum **Rebecca Quoss-Moore (Ph.D. '16)** published the blog post "Margaret Douglas's Verse-Fashioning in the Henrician Court" on *The Court Observer*, the official blog of the Society for Court Studies.
- English Ph.D. Candidate **Skye Oliver** and Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies Ph.D. candidate **Jean-Hugues Bitá'a Menye** were awarded the 2023-2024 Graduate School and International Education's James J. Hudson Doctoral Fellowships in the Humanities
- Recent graduate **Taylor Pike (M.A. '23)** will be starting law school at S.J. Quinney College of Law in Salt Lake City, Utah, this fall.
- Alum **Ann Riley-Adams (Ph.D. '22)** has been hired as a tenure-track Assistant Professor of English at Wayne State College and will be teaching medieval and early modern British literature.
- Recent graduate **Ana Rodriguez Rivera (M.A. '23)** has been hired for the position of Research Writer with UAMS--Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute.



Ann Riley-Adams, Ana Rodriguez Rivera, and John Strange

- Ph.D. student **Andrea Rogers's** book *Man Made Monsters* received the 2023 Walter Award for Teen Category and also was selected for the following: International Literacy Association's 2023 Book Award Winners (Young Adult Fiction); 2023 Whippoorwill Award Winners (Rural Young Adult and Middle Grades Literature); and the CCBC Choices 2023 (Young Adult Fiction), the best-of-the-year list for the Cooperative Children's Book Center. Andrea is also serving as the first Writer in Residence for the Adirondack Center for Writing.
- Alum **John Strange (M.A. '22)** was hired as Strategic Initiatives Associate with WhyteSpyder.
- Alum **Liza Vammen (M.A. '14)** has been promoted to Associate Director of the Business Communication Lab at the Walton College of Business.
- Alum **Katie Voss (M.A. '18)** was hired as Corporate Communications Director for Greystone Communities.

Updates from the GSE Organization

We want to thank all of the wonderful outgoing Graduate Students in English Organization officers for their hard work this past year! We also welcome, here, all of the incoming GSE officers and the GSE's new faculty sponsor:

- **President:** David Farris
- **Vice President:** Sarah Barch
- **Treasurer:** Guillermo Pupo
- **Secretary/Historian:** Lydia Sharpe
- **Student-Faculty Liaison:** Rachel Murray
- **Ph.D. Liaison:** Olivia Cash
- **M.A. Liaison:** Collette Bliss
- **M.F.A. Liaison:** Lizzie Fox
- **CLCS Liaison:** Isidoro Villa
- **RCO Liaison:** Lydia Sharpe
- **Media Dev. Coordinator:** Olivia Lynch
- **Faculty Sponsor:** Dr. Lisa Hinrichsen



One of the Flyers for a GSE-Sponsored Spring 2023 Event

GRADUATE STUDENTS IN ENGLISH

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT PUBLISHING?

Come to a publishing workshop sponsored by the GSE and led by Dr. Joshua Smith.

WHEN
Wednesday, February 8
4:00 p.m.

WHERE
Kimpel Hall
Room 313

ENJOY SOME TREATS WHILE YOUR PUBLICATION QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED:

WHERE SHOULD I PUBLISH?

WHEN SHOULD I PUBLISH?

HOW DO I PUBLISH?

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I PUBLISH?

Other GSE-Sponsored Spring 2023 Events (All flyers designed by GSE officers.)

Pictured below: one of the regular “Coffee Time!” morning get-togethers organized by the GSE (picture taken by Skye Oliver).

ALT-AC

JOBHUNT

Learn to convey academic experience on the job market with Lissette Lopez Szwydky, Ph.D.

April 24, 2023
4:30pm-5:30pm
Kimpel 312

Open to all graduate students

Presented by the Graduate Students in English
Contact almercerc@uark.edu with questions



GSE Spring 2023 Conference

The GSE’s Spring 2023 Conference, which took place on Saturday, March 4th, in Kimpel Hall, was a success! Presenters covered a wide range of topics. At right, English M.A. student **Jenna Carey** presents on John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.





English Ph.D. student **Scott Hendry** presents on “*The Labor of Representation: Jesse James, the Jesus Movement, and Narrative Iconography.*”

Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies Ph.D. student **Chy’Na Nellon** presents on “*A Juke Joint Experience.*”

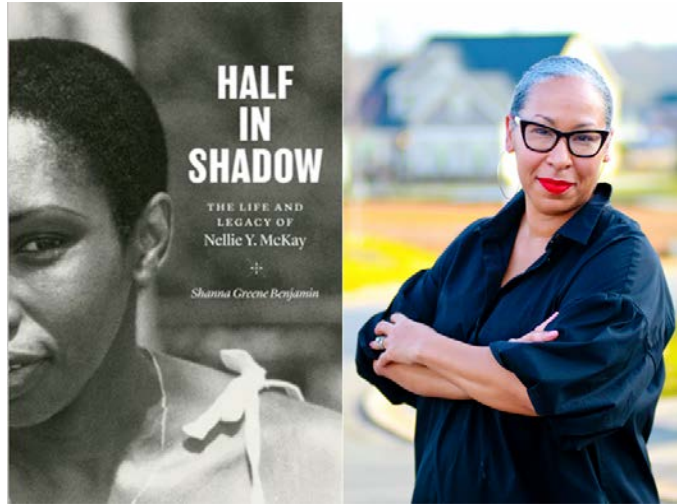


Some of the GSE officers who worked on the conference, from left to right: **Ana Rodriguez Rivera, John McManus, David Berg, Skye Oliver, Braden Taylor, and Jessica Allee.**

Other Spring 2023 Events of Note

Shanna G. Benjamin's Visit

Shanna G. Benjamin gave a public talk in Kimpel Hall, "Before Black Literature: Nellie Y. McKay, Collective Vision, and the Power of One to Overcome," which focused upon her biography *Half in Shadow: The Life and Legacy of Nellie Y. McKay*. In addition to the Department of English, other sponsors for the event were the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of History, and the Department of World Languages, Literatures & Cultures.



Benjamin's Book Cover; Shanna G. Benjamin

Susan Burton's Visit

Susan Burton, founder of A New Way of Life Reentry Project, visited Northwest Arkansas. She gave a talk about her life, work, and book, *Becoming Ms. Burton: From Prison to Recovery to Leading the Fight for Incarcerated Women*, co-written with Cari Lynn, at the Fayetteville Public Library. The event was co-sponsored by the Arkansas Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Fayetteville Public Library, the Prison Story Project, and the following university departments and programs: Brown Chair in English Literacy; Community Literacies Collaboratory; Department of English; Department of World Languages, Literatures & Cultures; Gender Studies Program; Program in Creative Writing and Translation; School of Social Work; and the University of Arkansas Humanities Center.



Susan Burton giving her talk; picture by Heather Robideaux with the Fayetteville Public Library

Undergraduate Study Abroad Program: “Theatre in London”

The “Theatre in London” study abroad program continued this summer! **Professor Susan Marren** (Department of English) and **Professor Shawn Irish** (Department of Theatre) were the faculty supervisors. (Professor Marren took over from **Professor Casey Kayser**, who served as faculty supervisor along with Professor Irish for the last several years.) Sixteen undergraduate students participated in the program, which ran from May 15th through June 19th. In addition to taking numerous tours around London, Bath, Oxford, and Stratford-upon-Avon, the group attended eleven theatrical performances, visited multiple museums and parks, went to the Tower of London, and saw other famous sites—including, of course, Shakespeare’s birthplace.



“Theatre in London” study abroad participants and faculty supervisors pose in front of William Shakespeare’s birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Recent Faculty News/Publications

Professor Jane Blunschi

- Professor Jane Blunschi was nominated for the Pushcart Prize for her story “Hand to Mouth” by Feels Blind Literary.
- Professor Blunschi’s novella, *Mon Dieu, Love*, winner of the 2022 Clay Reynolds Novella prize, was released by the Texas Review Press in April.



Professor Keith Booker

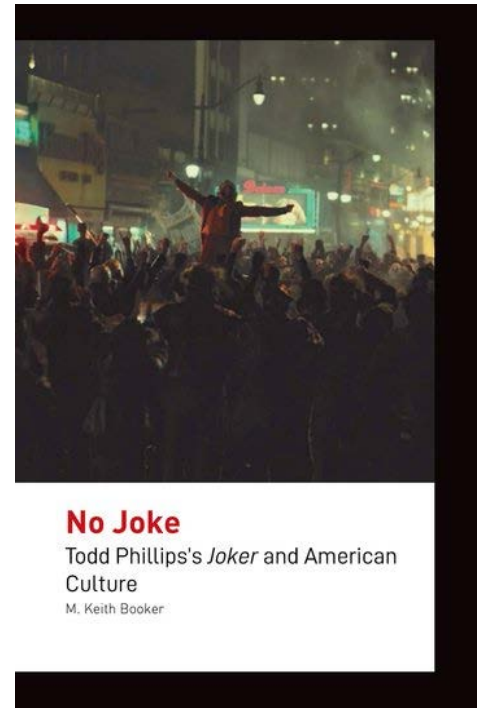
- Professor Keith Booker’s contribution to the *Los Angeles Review of Books* marking the 50th anniversary of the publication of Thomas Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow* can be found [here](#).
- Professor Booker’s latest book, *No Joke: Todd Phillips’s Joker and American Culture*, was released by Liverpool University Press.

Professor Mary Beth Long

- Professor Mary Beth Long is taking over, from Professor Joshua Byron Smith, the role of Director of the [Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program](#) with the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences.

Professor Megan McIntyre

- *Reviews in Digital Humanities* (edited by Roopika Risam) has a review of Professor Megan McIntyre’s collaboration with Annette Vee in their latest issue. The review can be found [here](#).



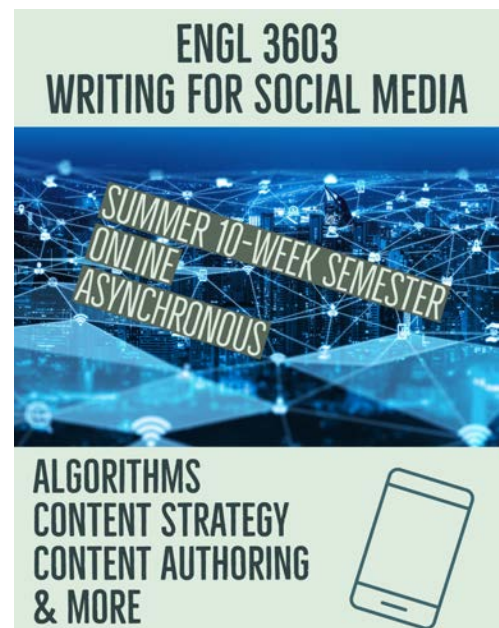


Three Recently Published Books Contributed to or Edited by Department Faculty Members

- Professor McIntyre has co-authored with Jennifer Lanatti Shen the chapter “Practicing (Antiracist and Anti-ableist) Multimodality: TA Training and Student Responses to Implementing a Multimodal Curriculum in First-Year Writing” in the book *Professionalizing Multimodal Composition*, edited by Shyam Pandey and Santosh Khadka and published by University Press of Colorado.
- Professor McIntyre’s chapter “Networked Intervention and the Emergence of #BostonHelp” appears in *Hashtag Activism Interrogated and Embodied: Case Studies on Social Justice Movements*, edited by Melissa Ames and Kristi McDuffie and published by University Press of Colorado.

Professor Adam Pope

- Dr. Adam Pope, Director of the Graduate Certificate in Technical Writing program, is offering a new course on content strategy and has revised the program’s Technical Writing Praxis course so that certificate students can pursue a track focusing on academic journal article writing.



Flyer for a Recent Online Undergraduate Course Taught by Professor Pope

Professor Eric Darnell Pritchard

- Professor Eric Darnell Pritchard published “Call Us By Our Names: Queer Gender and Hip Hop Fashion,” a chapter in the book *Fresh Fly Fabulous: 50 Years of Hip Hop Style*, published by Rizzoli Electa. The book is a catalogue for the recent Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology exhibition of the same name.

Professor Lissette Lopez Szwydky and Instructor Kristen Figgins

- Professor Lissette Lopez Szwydky has published a collection of essays, *Adaptation Before Cinema: Literary and Visual Convergence from Antiquity through the Nineteenth Century*, that she co-edited with Dr. Glenn Jellenik, English professor at the University of Central Arkansas. Doctoral alum and Department of English Instructor Kristen Figgins (Ph.D. '21) also has an essay included in the collection, “Alice, Animals, and Adaptation: John Tenniel’s Influence on Wonderland and Its Early Adaptation History.”

Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 Graduates

We congratulate all of our recently graduated students!!! 😊

Recent B.A. Graduates

Hunter Bear
Natalie Blevins
Abigail Bowman
Verna Bryan
Sarah Davis
Heather Drouse
Madelyn Dumas
Charlotte Edsall
Kristen Fite
Meghan Fleming
Garrett Glynn
Suzanne Gourley
Cameron Gunter

Emma Harris
Macie Hickman
Mary Kemp
Jacob LeBouff
Timothy Luft
Margaret Martin
Katelyn Miller
Alisa Newbold
Hailey Powell
Isabelle Rogers
Emily Scott
Makensie Selby
Amanda Shildt

Tanner Shotwell
Yalma Sifuentes
Camron Smith
Madeline Smith
John Strickland
Jade Teeuwen
Winter Valentine
Belinda Watson
Malorie Wiederkehr
Erica Wilson
Casey Wong
Kalia Yang
Luis Zapata

Recent M.A., M.F.A., and Ph.D. Graduates

Morgan Akers (M.A.)
David Berg (M.A.)
Lily Buday (M.F.A.)
Ryan Chamberlain (M.F.A.)
Jackie Chicaese (M.F.A.)
Miller Godwin (M.A.)
Kayla Green (M.A.)
Ali Hintz (M.F.A.)
Amelie Langland (M.F.A.)
Anna Mercer (M.A.)
Taylor Pike (M.A.)
Ann Riley-Adams (Ph.D.)
Ana Rodriguez Rivera (M.A.)
Abigail Ross (M.A.)
Vasantha Sambamurti (M.F.A.)
Audrey Scrafford (M.F.A.)
Braden Taylor (M.A.)
Sidney Thomas (M.F.A.)
Miranda Valerie (M.F.A.)
Mallory Whitson (M.A.)

Stay Connected

Stay connected with the Department of English by liking [our Facebook page](#), and please consider [giving a gift](#) to support our current students at the University of Arkansas. Thank you!

A final note: If you sent in a piece of news to be included in the alumni section and your update does not appear above, please accept our sincere apologies for the error and re-submit that information to lxp04@uark.edu so that it can appear in the next newsletter.

Have a wonderful rest of the summer!