

# ARKANSAS ENGLISH

**Fall 2021**

Newsletter for the Department of English at the University of Arkansas



Department of English  
Kimpel Hall 333  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
479-575-4301  
engl@uark.edu  
<https://english.uark.edu>

## **MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT**

While it has been, so far, yet another challenging academic year—with staff, students, and faculty all attempting to maintain a semblance of normalcy despite the ongoing impact of COVID—the Department of English still managed to accomplish so much this past fall.

Our community has been truly resilient, remaining as dedicated as ever to encouraging and facilitating the highest quality of writing, researching, and teaching. Equally important has been our continuing to focus on developing an atmosphere that is welcoming to and supportive of all individuals in our department, on the University of Arkansas campus, and beyond.

Please read, below, about what has recently happened to or been achieved by both current and past members of the Department of English, including many of our esteemed alumni. We hope you enjoy this latest department newsletter, and we wish you the best in 2022!

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# Remembrance of Nola Van Scyoc



**Nola Ruth Seidel Van Scyoc**, 95, of Fayetteville, Arkansas, passed away November 4, 2021, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

She earned her bachelor's degree at Fort Hays State University (Kansas) and served as Assistant to the Director of Secondary Education for a period. At various times, Nola was a teacher, secretary, librarian, Sunday School teacher, scout leader, volunteer, and tutor, but most of all, she enjoyed being a homemaker and participating in family activities. She was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Fayetteville.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 60 years, Dr. Leo Ledgerwood Van Scyoc, a beloved and highly respected professor in the Department of English for many years.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. John's Lutheran Church, 2730 E. Township Road, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701 or the UA Foundation - Leo and Nola Van Scyoc Award in English, 333 Kimpel Hall, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

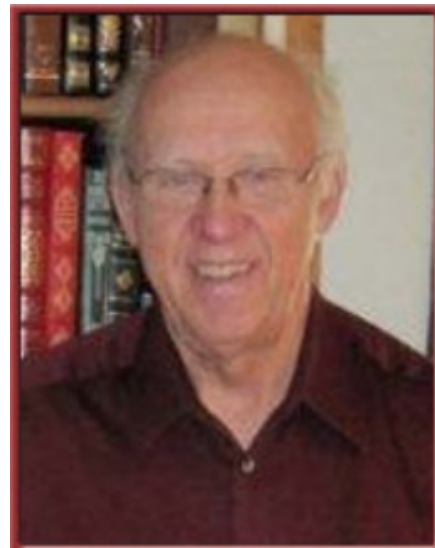
Click here to read the complete obituary:

<https://www.westfieldchapel.com/obituaries/Nola-Ruth-Van-Scyoc?obId=22997137#/celebrationWall>.

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# John Idol Graduate Student Fund

The Department of English gratefully acknowledges the establishment of the John Idol Graduate Student Fund, which has been set up in honor of alum **John Lane Idol, Jr.**, age 88, who passed away on February 26, 2021, in Boone, North Carolina. The fund will be used to support and reward research by our graduate students.



Dr. Idol attended Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, as a history and English major on the G.I. Bill, graduating with a B.S. degree in 1958. He then earned both an M.A. (1961) and a Ph.D. (1965) through the Department of English at the University of Arkansas.

In 1964, he accepted an appointment at Clemson University, in South Carolina, and taught there until his retirement in 1995. His special interests were the 19th-century American novel and 17th-century British poetry. Dr. Idol won citations for distinguished service from the Thomas Wolfe Society, the Nathaniel Hawthorne Society, and the American Literature Association. He was named a distinguished professor of English, and the Clemson Class of 1939 awarded him \$5,000 for outstanding teaching and research.

The author of dozens of articles and reviews, Dr. Idol wrote two books on Thomas Wolfe, co-authored one on Hawthorne, edited and co-edited six works by Wolfe, co-compiled a book of contemporary reviews of Hawthorne's work, and co-edited a volume of original essays on Hawthorne and women.

Many former students expressed deep admiration and regard for Dr. Idol. One former graduate student said, "Professor Idol was probably the best influence on the department and the university. . . . He taught us 'outside the curriculum' by his extraordinary yet humble example: how to be kind, how to love your work, how to show respect, how to help others, how to practice humility."

His peers among the faculty at Clemson respected Dr. Idol highly as well. One co-worker observed, "His good humor and kindness emanated from his language and behavior. . . . I learned many lessons from how he acted and talked. I will miss him, as will many of our colleagues. He lived a life full of intelligence and generosity."

The following link can be used to donate to the John Idol Graduate Student Fund:

[https://onlinegiving.uark.edu/?designation=Other+Department+or+Program&otherDesignation=John+Idol+Graduate+Student+Fund+\(30014923\)](https://onlinegiving.uark.edu/?designation=Other+Department+or+Program&otherDesignation=John+Idol+Graduate+Student+Fund+(30014923)).

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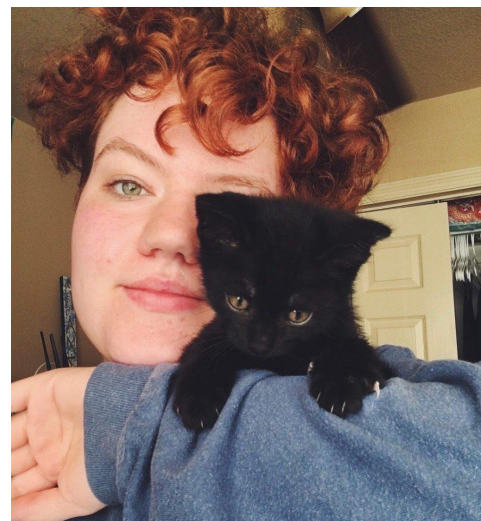
# New Faces in the Department

**Jennifer Croft** is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Creative Writing and Translation. She won the 2020 William Saroyan International Prize for Writing for her illustrated memoir *Homesick* and the 2018 Man Booker International Prize for her translation from Polish of Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk's *Flights*. She is also the author of *Serpientes y escaleras* and *Notes on Postcards* and the translator of Federico Falco's *A Perfect Cemetery*, Romina Paula's *August*, Pedro Mairal's *The Woman from Uruguay*, and Olga Tokarczuk's *The Books of Jacob*. She holds a Ph.D. from Northwestern University and an M.F.A. from the University of Iowa.



**Zachary Merritt** wandered into the English Department one day and, for some reason, they kept handing him money every couple of weeks. Lost and confused, he decided to stay because it seemed like a good deal. Highly reticent of writing in the third person, he decided to do it anyway because of peer pressure. Zachary is now a permanent Administrative Assistant in the main office. He likes cats, classical piano music, poetry, and coffee. He has a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Illinois. His greatest life aspiration is to own a well-equipped kitchen.

**Carly Riggs**, our department's new Office Manager, is originally from Fayetteville and attended Haas Hall Academy. She attended the University of Arkansas but dropped out during her freshman year and immediately began working on campus. She went to school for esthetics (facials, waxing, skincare, lash and brow tinting, lash extensions) and then started back at the university post pandemic. She is always reading too many books at once, and she is passionate about any storytelling medium.





**Carole Schuster** came to the English Department in August as a RazorTemp and has thoroughly enjoyed assisting department staff in getting the offices organized for the Fall 2021 semester. She is semi-retired from a professional career in Social Work serving children and families in the Northwest Arkansas region since graduating from the University of Arkansas in 1994 and then the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 2003. Prior to coming to Fayetteville, Carole traveled extensively throughout the U.S. and is currently planning to go on another road trip to the Grand Tetons, Yellowstone, and the Pacific Northwest with her beloved sister. Carole resides in Fayetteville with her spouse Gary and cat, Sam.

## Professor Bailey's Trip to the University of Arkansas - Pine Bluff Campus



On Saturday, November 6, 2021, **Professor Constance Bailey** took a small group of students to the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff to attend a football game against Pine Bluff. Current and former students from Dr. Bailey's graduate seminar "The Black Collegian in Popular Culture" attended the excursion and got to experience the cultural milieu on an HBCU campus firsthand.

In the course, students read and learned about the educational rites of passage experienced by Black Americans, especially first-generation college students. Students also learned about the expansion of HBCUs following the second Morrill Act of 1890 and *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896.

The excursion was co-sponsored by the Department of English and the African and African American Studies program but would not have been possible without the assistance of the Athletics Department at UAPB.



Professor Bailey would like to extend a special thank you to Mr. Chris Robinson, Director of Athletics, and Mr. Lee Williams, Director of Sports Performance. Also, special thanks goes to Professor Niketa Reed in the Department of Journalism at the University of Arkansas, who attended as a chaperone. In addition to other planning that they did, these individuals helped to secure the group members' tickets to the football game and arranged for a campus tour.



Professor Bailey plans to continue to expand the trip for future students in her class to include an overnight stay so that there is more interaction with UAPB students who are English majors or humanities scholars more generally.



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# Faculty Spotlight: Creative Writing Professor Bryan Hurt

*Interview by Bethany Cole*

## **What are your most recent publications?**

I've published a story collection, *Everyone Wants to Be Ambassador to France*, and an anthology, *Watchlist: 32 Stories by Persons of Interest*, though both of those came out a few years ago. This summer I published a short story, "Brain in a Jar," in the journal *No Contact* and another, "Bottom Ten Percent," in *Action Spectacle*. I'm currently working on a novel.



**Professor of Creative Writing Bryan Hurt**

## **What awards/distinctions have you received?**

My story collection was awarded the Starcherone Prize for Innovative Fiction. I've won fellowships to attend the Sewanee and Tin House Writers Workshops. This year the magazine I edit, the *Arkansas International*, won a Whiting Award, which will provide money and mentorship to help grow students, though I can't take much credit for the award; all the credit belongs to the hardworking graduate students in the M.F.A. for Creative Writing that give the magazine so much time, attention, and passion.

## **Tell me a little about the time when you first came to the university.**

I came to the university in fall 2019 at a somewhat transitional time in my life. I really appreciated the opportunity my first few months here gave me to settle into new routines, make new friends, explore Fayetteville and Northwest Arkansas, and teach incredibly talented students. To be honest, before I moved here I had no real idea of what Fayetteville or Northwest Arkansas was like, and if I did have any ideas they were all wrong ones. I was charmed by the town, impressed by the students, and not a little bit intimidated by my impressive colleagues, who were never anything less than warm and welcoming. When the fall 2019 semester ended, I was full of energy and optimism and eager to see how bustling Fayetteville and the university would be in the spring. But then, of course, the pandemic happened.



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**In addition to teaching, what roles have you had during your time at the university? What are your current roles?**

In addition to teaching, I serve on several committees, one of which selects incoming graduate students for the M.F.A. The other helps plan and build the English department's online major as part of the global campus. I'm also currently the Editor in Chief of the *Arkansas International*, a position I inherited from Geoff Brock, who founded the magazine and led it to great success the five years prior to my arrival.

**What is the most challenging aspect of teaching creative writing? How have you overcome it?**

I don't know if I'd describe any part of teaching creative writing to be particularly challenging, but I also don't want to come off as flippant. It's an incredible privilege and joy to have a career that allows me to talk and think about what I love, just as it's an incredible privilege to work with talented up-and-coming writers. I think part of my job is to remain grateful and amazed that I get to do this. I also want to communicate that sense of joy and gratitude to my students. We're all very lucky that we get to be here and do this.

**Tell us about your work overseeing the *Arkansas International*. How did you come to that position? What has been the most gratifying aspect of it? How would you like to see this project grow under your guidance?**

I love working on the *Arkansas International*. It lets me put on a completely different hat and think about problems completely separate from those of teaching and writing. How do we effectively fundraise? How do we increase submission numbers? Is it really a good social media strategy to pick a Twitter fight with the *Paris Review* because that's what a lot of other magazines are doing? I get to be entrepreneurial and think about organizations and structures, which I find to be very satisfying. In my own minor way, I also get to weigh in and help reshape the publishing world to be more fair, inclusive, and just. There are so many joys in working on the magazine. I get to publish first-time authors. I get to discover incredible talents from around the world who I'd never have read unless sent the work our way.

The goal for the next few years is to steadily increase our budget. We publish on a shoestring. I'd like to be able to pay more members of the staff for the work they do. I'd like to raise contributor payments. We've been talking about design a lot of late, and I'd love to work with innovative and talented designers to experiment with the look and layout of the magazine.

**What are your goals for your students?**

Happiness, gratitude, joy. I really think the stuff of a good life makes for good writing. Of course, I want them all to have wildly successful professional lives as well.

**If you could only teach creative writers one thing, what would it be?**

Approach the work with joy and humility, even if it's dark. Especially if it's dark! It's always a good idea to go for a walk.

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# Alumni Spotlights

## Interview with Mark Babione (B.A. '90)

By Bethany Cole



Mark Babione

**You graduated with your B.A. in English from the University of Arkansas in 1990. Do you have a fond memory or two from your time in the program that you could share?**

Perhaps my favorite memory is just walking to class in all kinds of different weather. October was my favorite time of year. As for the program, I really enjoyed watching my writing improve. I found that the simple act of just putting in the work yielded results.

**After graduating, what did your career path look like? How did an English major come to work for American Airlines?**

After graduation I joined the Air Force and went to pilot training. After pilot training I applied for a program to get a master's degree, and the Air Force sent me to the Journalism School at the University of Colorado, Boulder. From there I did a short tour in aircraft maintenance at an Air Force base in Upstate New York. I returned to flying in 1994 and got checked out on the C-5 Galaxy and then spent

the next twenty years flying it in the active duty and Air Force Reserve.

At some point I got tired of the pace and priorities of the active-duty Air Force and decided to leave for civilian flying. I was hired at American Airlines in 2000 and continued flying the C-5 in the Reserves until 2014. I'd have to say that I had the most fun in the Air Force Reserve. We got to do some really cool stuff that to this day I still can't believe that I did. We would fly into pretty remote places, such as Mongolia and the Azores, carrying all sorts of cargo. One time I flew a plane full of dolphins for the Navy from Hawaii direct to Spain and also flew Bill Clinton's presidential limousines into Northern Ireland.

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### **How has your background in English helped you as a pilot?**

In order to be an Air Force pilot, you had to have a college degree. I majored in English because it was what I was good at in high school. Leo Van Scyoc was my adviser, and I was pretty candid with him about what I hoped to gain from the degree. He enrolled me in ROTC and got me through the program as efficiently as possible. Years later while applying to American Airlines, he wrote me a letter of recommendation which basically said, "Yeah, he's a pretty good guy, but it was always clear that he was really more interested in flying than anything else," which was the perfect recommendation for somebody who was applying to the airlines.

Thanks to my English degree, my announcements up at 35,000 feet are descriptive and grammatically correct. 😊 When I was working in aircraft maintenance, it didn't take long before my boss and coworkers figured out that I could write, and they began asking me to write their performance reports and promotion recommendations. I had pretty good luck getting people awards and commendations and was really glad to help them out.

### **What do you enjoy most about being a pilot?**

I never dread going to work. I absolutely love my job. I love going on the road and I love coming home. I love the people I work with, and flying is fun.

### **What was one literature and/or writing course you took at the University of Arkansas that significantly changed the way you see the world? How exactly did it re-shape your point of view?**

There really wasn't one course, but I still remember a short story I read called "The Death of Ivan Ilych." It helped put life in proper perspective. It was a pretty stark reminder of what awaits us at the end and reinforced my belief that I should make the most of my time while I'm here.

### **What is, currently, one of your favorite genres of literature to read? Is there a particular text in that genre that you can recommend?**

Most of my reading is technical manuals and publications. However, history and political science are my favorite non-fiction genres. My all-time favorite book is *Basic Economics* by Thomas Sowell. *Unbroken* and *Enemy at the Gates* are close seconds (don't bother seeing the movies; read the books.) *Lord of the Rings* and *Pillars of the Earth* are my favorite fiction books.

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## Interview with Sabine Schmidt (M.F.A. '93)

By Bethany Cole

**When did you graduate with your M.F.A.? Do you have a fond memory or two from your time in the program that you could share?**

I defended my thesis in December 1993 and remember a bear hug from Jim Whitehead at the end of the meeting. He'd stepped in at the last minute because another professor was unable to do it. I didn't know him well and was a bit intimidated by his formidable presence. That hug meant a lot.

I had come to the University of Arkansas from Hamburg, Germany, with a degree in American studies, a specialization in southern literature, and a big-city chip on my shoulder. I had never been to Arkansas. For my first few weeks in Fayetteville, pretty much everything felt confusing and alien. The moment when culture shock gave way to a sense of possible belonging in this strange, sort-of-southern place came at the corner of Township and North College. I was going to a party with a fellow T.A. [graduate teaching assistant], and her truck died right at the intersection. She walked up to the Days Inn at the corner to call her brother. We sat on the curb and waited. It was a Saturday night, warm, moths were fluttering in the parking lot lights, people were going to the movies, bits of conversation and laughter coming through open windows as they drove by. A pickup truck pulled up behind us. A stranger got out and offered his help. I can't remember how and if my friend's truck got fixed or if we went to the party, but that scene has stayed with me. John DuVal made me tell this story for years afterwards. And just to keep things in perspective, when the same friend and I later drove up North College on another night, some high school boys in the bed of the pickup truck in front of us got up and mooned us.



Photo of Sabine Schmidt by Don House

**After graduating, what did your career path look like? I understand you are a photographer and writer. How did your time at the University of Arkansas shape your creativity in both of those pursuits?**

I wouldn't call it a career path so much as creative vacillating between lifelong passions for words and images.

I returned to Hamburg and worked as a music journalist, magazine editor, and translator. I then taught German at Rhodes College in Memphis for a few years and decided to go back to the University of

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Arkansas in 2002 for a Ph.D. in CLCS [Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies]. I was really lucky to have steady translation work from the time I graduated, mainly for the German edition of *National Geographic*, until the magazine sold two years ago.

Graduate school in general and CLCS in particular helped me with the path towards photography as practice and not just an object of study. I was writing a dissertation on city spaces, walking, and memory in twentieth-century fiction. The rigorousness of thinking, reading, and writing in my classes led to a rigorousness of looking and composing—a formal, geometrical exploration and interpretation of space. My earliest project was a series of images taken on walks through New York City and Frankfurt, where I traced some of the routes taken by the protagonists of Paul Auster’s *City of Glass* and Peter Kurzeck’s *Das alte Jahrhundert* (*The Old Century*) series of novels. I have always been a walker—not at the compulsive level of the characters in Auster’s and Kurzeck’s novels, but I definitely use walking in a similar way to explore memory. Photography let me give a shape to those impressions and encounters. It seemed like a logical next step back then, and still does. *Memory and the City*, my first-ever photography exhibition, took place in the QWC’s [Quality Writing Center’s] computer lab in 2007.



*Bayou De View, near Cotton Plant by Sabine Schmidt*



Photo of Sabine Schmidt (composing and metering the photo above) by Don House

I should also mention the Writers in the Schools trips. Those travels in rural Arkansas and time spent in small towns taught me how to look at place.

I never finished my dissertation, but the work on it still informs my visual and written work, especially through the concept of psychogeography, the exploration of places as holders of emotions and memory. My current photography project takes its title from one of the primary sources.

**You were awarded this year’s ACNMWA Artist Award. Can you tell us a little bit about that, as well as how you came to develop your style and perspective as a photographer?**

The Arkansas Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts gives one award per year. I received the 2021 award for work on my new project *Rememorials*, a photographic series featuring stylized paper models of Arkansas buildings that no longer exist. All have in common that they were sites of injustice committed against Arkansans because of their race and/or gender. I am making seven paper houses and plan to photograph each one at the original site. The negative space of the paper building emphasizes the absence, the loss of what was there before.

The idea came from the travels and research for my new book *Remote Access: Small Public Libraries in Arkansas*, which I co-authored with Don House. I wrote about some of the events and people in the book, but it became clear to me that their stories needed specific attention and a chance to atone and remember.

As a white European immigrant, I am concerned, of course, that I am appropriating Black culture in undertaking this project. But as a citizen of Germany, I feel that what Germans call *Trauerarbeit*, the “work of grief,” is my responsibility in my Arkansas home as it was in my native country. The memory of the Holocaust and the horrific crimes committed both by the Nazi regime and ordinary Germans is part of every German’s awareness. I grew up in a society that has been facing its Nazi history and the resulting guilt and responsibility for four generations. The longer I live in the U.S., the clearer it becomes to me how much suffering and how many victims here remain unrecognized, if not deliberately ignored.

There is a German public art project called *Stolpersteine* (“stumbling stones”) that also inspired me. It’s a decentralized memorial project started 30 years ago. Community members place small brass blocks at the last known residences of Holocaust victims. The blocks are intended to make passers-by stop and acknowledge the local and national past.

The project title has its roots in my dissertation research. In *Beloved*, Toni Morrison uses the term *rememory* to describe a knowledge of place and people that is closely related to the concept of psychogeography I applied in my dissertation draft.



**Cover of *Remote Access: Small Public Libraries in Arkansas*,  
the new book by Sabine Schmidt and Don House**

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Can you tell us a little more about your new photography book, *Remote Access: Small Public Libraries in Arkansas*, co-authored with Don House, which was published by the University of Arkansas Press in December 2021? What led to its development, and what do you hope it will give to the readers?

Don and I collaborated on a series about people and places of the Wichita Mountains region in Oklahoma a few years ago that involved both photography and writing. We worked well together and liked the process. On road trips in Arkansas, we were always seeing the great work rural and small-town librarians are doing despite all the things they may lack: funding, internet and phone connectivity, government support, space, staff, parking—the list goes on. We wanted to show what they do and also how rural Arkansans deal with the obstacles their communities face. Public libraries are so important in this battle. Books are only one of their tools; food programs and computer literacy help are maybe even more important.

For this four-year project, we traveled all over Arkansas and photographed 21 libraries and their communities. We saw that the disparities between the metropolitan areas of Little Rock and Northwest Arkansas and the rest of the state are as striking as they are systemic. And we decided that images were not enough, so each of us wrote 22 essays telling stories and sharing our experiences.

I hope that the book will give to readers what it gave to its creators: an understanding of how indispensable small public libraries are and how wide the urban-rural gap in Arkansas is; an understanding of the ongoing effects of racial and economic segregation and discrimination; and maybe the motivation to take a road trip, visit a small-town library, and buy some books from the used-book shelves or just put money in the donation jar. Each library has one.



*Laundry and Cleaners, Hamburg*  
by Sabine Schmidt



*Children's Section, Library, Tollette*  
by Sabine Schmidt

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**What was one literature and/or writing course you took at the University of Arkansas that significantly changed the way you see the world, especially as a photographer? How exactly did it re-shape your point of view?**

John DuVal's translation workshops changed my whole outlook. I came from the German university system, where the distinction between student and teacher is usually made quite clear. During those workshop afternoons in 713 Kimpel, I learned to read and critique other translators' work and understand the importance of peer critique. Most importantly, though, John treated (and addressed) us as translators, not as students of literary translation. To be taken seriously as a professional right from the start had a great effect on me: I understood that I was part of a community of writers and thinkers, some with much more experience, some with less, but I had as much right to be in this community as everyone else.

The other life-changing class was Introduction to Comparative Literature, taught by John Locke. Dr. Locke knew so much and was so kind and always willing to share his knowledge and treat everyone with kindness. His view of the world across languages, cultures, and academic disciplines stayed with me and motivated me to apply for the CLCS program years later.



*Cephas Chapel, Wrightsville by Sabine Schmidt*

**What is, currently, one of your favorite genres of literature to read? Is there a particular text in that genre that you can recommend?**

I'm all over the place when it comes to fiction, but I try (in vain) to keep up with speculative and western novels. Not surprisingly, cities and walking often play a role. N.K. Jemisin's *Broken Earth Trilogy* was with me during the first months of the pandemic, and her latest novel *The City We Became* is a great take on cities, memory, and how people literally embody place. Of the many new novels set in the American West, I particularly like C Pam Zhang's *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* (a lot of walking going on in there) and David Heska Wanbli Weiden's *Winter Counts*.



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## Interview with Danny Sexton (B.A. '95, M.A. '98)



Danny Sexton

You are originally from Dumas, Arkansas, a town of about 5,000 people, situated near the southeast corner of the state. Could you talk a little about what it was like coming to Fayetteville for the first time and moving here to pursue your B.A.?

Most striking to me during my first visit to northwest Arkansas and Fayetteville was the geographical differences. Having grown up in the Delta lowlands, I had been accustomed to the flatness of farmland. Before that trip, I had never been north of Conway, located in central Arkansas. As one of my high school friends, who would also be starting his first year at the U of A that fall, and I made our way along the Pig Trail (Arkansas Highway 23), I was astonished by the hills and scenic beauty. I was grateful that he was driving because I do not think my eyes were ever on the road ahead.

When I first arrived on campus, I was once again in awe of so much, particularly the style of the architecture. During my first year at the U of A, I was in the architectural program and would spend a considerable amount of my

first year in Vol Walker Hall, which is still one of my favorite buildings on campus.

Although my eight years at the University of Arkansas did not go exactly as I thought they would have when I made that first visit in 1990, I view those years with deep affection for they enabled me to develop in so many unexpected ways.

**Your [QCC faculty page](#) mentions that your mom greatly influenced your love of reading. As you know, parents telling their children to read “because it's good for them” is not always—perhaps rarely—a successful strategy. Could you elaborate on how your mom effectively reinforced your interest in books at a young age?**

This story is a bittersweet one because I recently lost my mother in August of 2019. During her funeral, I recall many lifelong friends of hers who knew her before she became a mother speaking about how she so desperately wanted to have children, and it seemed that she would never have that opportunity. However, after ten years of trying, she was in near disbelief when her doctor told her that she was pregnant. She was determined to be the best mother possible, and among one of the first prenatal practices she adopted was to read to me during her pregnancy. Whether this anecdote is true or not, it

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has greatly influenced my relationship to reading and books. I do not recall my mother ever telling me that I needed to read; it just seems that it was something that I did so perhaps her story of reading to me during her pregnancy is true.

Furthermore, she fully supported my love of reading and books. In grade school, we could order books through Scholastic. My classmates were often envious of me because when books arrived, I usually had a box or two to take home. And while my mother may not have been an avid reader, she loved garage sales. Usually at these sales, there was a box of books, hidden underneath a table or in some other out of the way place. I had a knack for finding them. I recall a few times sorting through the box when the person conducting the sale would offer to sell my mom the entire box for a ridiculously low price, even for a garage sale. My mom never said no, so by the time I was a senior in high school, I had quite an extensive library.



Danny with three QCC students at the June 3, 2018, Queens Pride Parade

**Could you share a fond memory from your time as an English M.A. student at the U of A and/or describe a favorite course that you took here?**

My fondest memory of my time as an English M.A. student is actually one that began before I was a student. After I graduated with my B.A. in English, I returned to Dumas, Arkansas, where I went back to work at the local Wal-Mart. I had no plans to attend graduate school, so I simply worked and returned home at the end of each day. However, one evening when I returned home, my mom told me that a Dr. Leo Van Scyoc from the U of A had called and asked that I call him back. The first thought that occurred to me was that for some reason, I had not graduated. With much fear, I returned his call and was relieved when he informed me that he was assigning graduate assistantships for the upcoming fall semester and could not find my graduate school application. I responded that I had not applied. I do not recall him asking me if I wanted to apply. All I remember is that he gave me a deadline by which to submit my application material. It is my fondest memory because without it, there would be no other ones of my M.A. days.

While there were many courses that I thoroughly enjoyed, the one that was most influential was a seminar on Jane Austen and George Eliot taught by Brian Wilke. I had read Austen, but this Eliot person was quite new to me. The first Eliot we read was *The Mill on the Floss*, and I was instantly hooked. I was incredibly moved by Maggie Tulliver (by the way, my mother's name is also Maggie) and the clever way

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in which Eliot told this story. Yet, I do recall the ending as a surprise, one that I read twice because I thought I must have surely misread it. I remember mentioning my reading experience with Wilke, and we had a very insightful conversation both about the ending and on Eliot.

**Your doctoral dissertation was titled “Divided Men: The Masculinity/Marriage Dilemma in the Novels of George Eliot.” What is your favorite novel by Eliot, and why?**

My relationship with George Eliot has been an evolving one in that at certain times in my life, one novel holds more significance than another. Had I been asked this question in my mid 20s, the answer would have been *The Mill on the Floss*. And the why would have been because of the characterization and development of Maggie Tulliver. Every thought and action of hers is painfully true and in alignment with someone of her circumstances. Even her ending, although problematic as it is, seems right. She is also a character that causes us as readers to struggle and to realize that there is great distinction between what we as readers would like for her to do if we were her, and what she must do because we are not her. In my early 30s, that novel became *Daniel Deronda*. The why here is much more layered and complex. In her last novel, Eliot requires for us as readers to do a lot of the heavy lifting. I am drawn to most of the characters of this novel, the titular Deronda, the problematic Gwendolen, and even the despicable Grandcourt. Yet, they seemed to be presented as puzzles, with only pieces of their lives presented to us. And even though I have read this novel numerous times over the years, each rereading reveals some aspect that I had not seen prior. It reminds me of how as young children, we would often ask to be read the same story over and over again because each reading kept open a sense of awe. It is this awe that *Daniel Deronda* brings to me.



**Danny with QCC faculty at a conference where they spoke about the *Humanitarian Pedagogy Across the Disciplines: Reflections on Mass Atrocity Education in the Community College Context* book.**

**What is, currently, one of your favorite courses to teach, and why?**

Initially when I read this question, I was inclined to select one of the upper level courses that I often teach, such as Genre, Science Fiction, or Queer Literature; however, as I started to reflect on the question more deeply, I realized that one of my favorite courses to teach remains English Composition II.

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The first two reasons border on nearly selfish ones, but it fills me with great delight to be present as a guide and observer as students encounter, experience and understand what is often for them a “new” work of literature. Through their discoveries, I am able to relive my own first experiences of a work. Lastly, I love that English Composition II enables me to teach a variety of genres, time periods, and authors.

**What is the best part about being a professor of English on one of The City University of New York (CUNY) campuses, and can you tell us a little about the book *Humanitarian Pedagogy Across the Disciplines: Reflections on Mass Atrocity Education in the Community College Context*, to which you recently contributed a chapter, “Using Cultural Resources and Problem-Based Learning to Prepare Students to Become Global Citizens”?**



**Danny with other community college professors from across the U.S. during a two-week trip to India, where the group studied and learned about urban sustainability. This photo was taken January 12, 2019, in Mysuru.**

The best part of being a professor of English at my particular CUNY campus, Queensborough Community College (QCC), is the diversity of the student body. QCC is one of the most ethical and racially diverse campuses in the nation with students from nearly 130 countries who speak close to 80 different languages. This diversity provides me with opportunities to interact with and learn from students with different backgrounds and cultures from myself.

More importantly, it compels

me, as an educator, to be highly conscious of the texts and curriculum choices that I make. For instance, I have often taught Ayad Akhtar’s Pulitzer prize drama *Disgraced*, but it had not occurred to me how Pakistani and/or students from a Muslim background would experience the character of Amir Kapoor. Once after teaching the play, a group of Muslim students asked to meet with me. While they understand Akhtar’s portrayal of Amir and what led him to act and behave as he does, they were also concerned that many non-Muslim students may incorrectly view Amir Kapoor as representative of ALL Muslim-Americans; it is what Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie speaks about in her July 2009 Ted Talk, entitled “The Danger of a Single Story”—when we only tell or teach one story, it causes people to generalize and make assumptions. After this dialogue with my students, I changed the course to include other literary works featuring Muslim Americans as well as using Adichie’s Ted Talk.

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In many ways, the book *Humanitarian Pedagogy Across the Disciplines: Reflections on Mass Atrocity Education in the Community College Context*, to which I contributed a chapter, “Using Cultural Resources and Problem-Based Learning to Prepare Students to Become Global Citizens,” speaks to diversity and how as educators we can create curriculum that provides students from diverse ethnical, racial, and cultural backgrounds with transformative educational experiences. My chapter, specifically, focuses on using campus resources to achieve this goal. At QCC, we are fortunate to have three such campus resources: the QCC Art Gallery, the Queensborough Performing Arts Center (QPAC), and the Kupferberg Holocaust Center (KHC). For a number of years, the KHC has received a grant to host a National Endowment for the Humanities colloquium. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the colloquia was comprised of a number of events on “Fleeing Genocide: Displacement, Exile, and the Refugee.” What I detail is how I aligned my composition courses with the colloquia and created a problem-based learning project which required my students to research and, in groups, work on a possible solution to an issue they have identified, such as assisting men to find work, helping refugee children adjust to schooling, or creating safe spaces for women in refugee camps.

**What is one activity you've done for fun in the past year that you highly recommend to others?**

I fear my definition of “fun” might be different from most, but one activity that I am doing is studying seriously Russian. I have long been fascinated by Russian history and literature and twice have flirted with learning Russian. However, during the pandemic and with encouragement from my husband who is learning Spanish, I signed up for Babbel and, so far, it is going well, even though I am not quite ready to read Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* in Russian yet.

## Interview with Uyen Dang (Ph.D. '18)

**How did you decide to come to the University of Arkansas for your doctoral program? Had you been to the U.S. before you started your graduate studies here in Fayetteville?**

I had never been to the U.S. before I started my graduate program in Fayetteville, but I had always wanted to study abroad even since I was young. I was so excited to study at the University of Arkansas, one of the public universities and research institutions with rich cultural and academic activities. Thanks to the academic environment, I felt that I could progress academically and professionally with the instructions and guidance of wonderful professors and instructors, and the assistance of the university staff. Not only could I have the chance to enrich my cultural awareness to learn various cultures from students from different parts of the world, but I could also entertain myself with the



Uyen Dang

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natural beauty. University of Arkansas is in one of the most beautiful cities in the United States with the Ozark Mountains that bring a peaceful atmosphere. There, I met a lot of nice and friendly local people. This peaceful and academic environment could provide me with favorable conditions not only to engage myself in academic activities but also immerse myself in the verdant nature and cultural activities.

**What did you think of Northwest Arkansas once you moved here? Were you able to see much of the state and region while you were completing your Ph.D.?**

Northwest Arkansas is one of the most favorable places to live and study. The friendly environment welcoming new students with orientation, get-together, assistance, and diverse activities helped me adapt quickly to the new place. I was impressed by the local people who volunteered to help orient students at the beginning of the fall semester. I was grateful for the dedicated and helpful advice from the English Department and other offices.

I like natural places and physical activities, such as hiking. Northwest Arkansas has become one of my favorite and memorable places. While I was completing the program, I could manage to visit some parts of the state in the Ozark mountains with scenic beauty. I remember the visit to the Devil's Den state park, the afternoon standing at the Whitaker Point at Hawksbill Crag, the afternoon canoeing at the Buffalo River, the whole day hiking at the Lost Valley and Petit Jean State Parks, a picnic at Lake Fayetteville, and a visit to Lake Wedington and the Beaver Lake. I really like the peaceful atmosphere of Fayetteville which is full of green colors in the summer and beautiful colors of leaves in the fall.

**Your area of specialization was Rhetoric and Composition Studies. What was one of your favorite courses to take while you were at the U of A, and why? What has been one of your favorite courses to teach, either at the U of A or elsewhere?**

My favorite course was in Rhetoric and Composition, which I took in the first semester, called "Style and Rhetoric," taught by Professor David Jolliffe. I still remember analyzing one of the five canons of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery, which were applied in many areas of academic and practical life. I found them interesting because I realized I had encountered much of their application in real life and academic writing. I remember analyzing a speech, and it was fascinating to analyze a piece of writing with new perspectives.

While at the U of A, I liked teaching Composition I. This course provided students with various skills: reasoning, providing claims and support, logical thinking, synthesizing, research skills, searching and evaluating material, reading, and writing skills. Back in my country [Vietnam] after my graduation, I also continued teaching writing. In teaching a module called "Essay Writing," I found that rhetoric could help students improve reading and writing strategies by understanding the purposes of reading and writing and finding meanings in writing what matters. Teaching reading and writing is challenging but rewarding. I realized that reading and writing skills that students had learned could empower them in the age of widespread information that required fast reading and critical thinking skills to process information.

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**The title of your dissertation project was “Activating Schemata in ESL Writing.” To what extent did your doctoral research change the way you teach English as a second language to your students?**

My dissertation focused on factors that negatively influenced the writing process of ESL learners and underlining areas that supported their process of writing. My research helped me better understand ESL learners’ circumstances, attitudes, difficulties, strengths, and weaknesses towards learning to write. The more I understood about ESL writing, the better I was informed about my methods and strategies used in teaching. Specifically, I changed my teaching methods by tailoring my teaching based on students’ authentic needs and individual learners’ knowledge and competence.

Among the aspects of schemata—linguistic knowledge, language competence, knowledge of the topic, and rhetorical knowledge—ESL learners might have limitations on linguistic knowledge and skills. However, some advanced learners might encounter little difficulty in linguistic knowledge and prior knowledge of the topic, but the limitations lie in their language usage—accurate terminology together with specific and natural word usage. Lower-level learners, however, could mainly have restrictions on structures and vocabulary. Therefore, depending on the authentic needs of each class, I could employ different strategies to instruct and support their learning. In activating their schemata, I was more attentive to what learners brought to their writing class and more informed about students’ lack of areas that needed fulfilling. This attention helped me work to bridge the gap between their competence and the authentic needs.

## Program Updates

The following updates provide recent news about a number of programs within our department: The Brown Chair in English Literacy Initiative, the Office of Rhetoric and Composition, the M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing and Translation, and the English Graduate Program (M.A. and Ph.D. programs). We are not including any news on our English Undergraduate Program (the directorship of which has recently changed, being transferred from Dr. Karen Madison to Dr. Sean Dempsey during the fall), but a report on that program will be included in the Spring 2022 issue of the department’s newsletter.

### **News from the Brown Chair in English Literacy Initiative**

As it concludes a busy fall semester, the [Brown Chair in English Literacy Initiative](#) is now looking ahead to an exciting start to 2022.

After co-sponsoring a popular workshop this past summer, “Planning Writing Projects,” led by Dr. Beth Godbee, the Brown Chair in English Literacy Initiative and the Fayetteville Public Library collaborated again in October to sponsor a virtual “Contemplative Writing Workshop,” also led by Godbee.

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Godbee, who has written for *Inside Higher Ed* about [her decision to leave a tenured position at Marquette University in 2018](#), now regularly publishes pieces on contemplative writing through her blog, [Heart-Head-Hands.com](#). Her research focuses upon “social, racial, and environmental justice; power, agency, and rights; and relational communication” (<https://heart-head-hands.com/beth-godbee/>).

Taking place over three evenings—October 5th, 12th, and 19th—with each meeting lasting two hours, the “Contemplative Writing Workshop” was a fully registered event, attracting participants with a wide range of writing perspectives and experiences. Godbee talked with workshop participants on a number of topics, including how they understood the term “contemplative writing” and engaged in “contemplative



**Beth Godbee concluding the "Contemplative Writing Workshop" series.**

practices”; “productive” versus “receptive” literacies; developing a vocabulary to express “emotional literacies”; how contemplative writing can disrupt the kind of storytelling that one is conditioned to write (to be more conscious or attentive in one’s writing practice); and three main types of writing: for one’s self, for other people, and for the purpose of institutional change.

Professor Eric Darnell Pritchard, the Brown Chair in English Literacy, described the value of Godbee’s workshop to the community as “an incredible opportunity for literacy advocates and writers in Arkansas and beyond to engage substantively with a noted community educator and thought leader in community literacies and its intersections with social justice and contemplative writing, and to incorporate insights gained from that exchange into their own important work as writers, readers, teachers, and creatives.”

During the fall, the Brown Chair in English Literacy Initiative also co-sponsored a lecture by Dr. K.J. Rawson. Rawson is the founder of the [Digital Transgender Archive](#), a digital literacies and rhetorics archival project that documents trans\* histories and makes them publicly accessible. The lecture was organized by Professor Joe Hatfield, in the Department of Communication, and the Gender Studies Program.

Coming up in Spring 2022, the Brown Chair in English Literacy Initiative will be offering a number of virtual “Mindfulness Writing Retreats.” The initiative will be hosting these events in partnerships with Arkansas public libraries statewide. One of the retreats will be designated for young adult participants. Next spring will also see the launch of the [Arkansas Literacy Lab](#), another new program of the Brown Chair in English Literacy Initiative.



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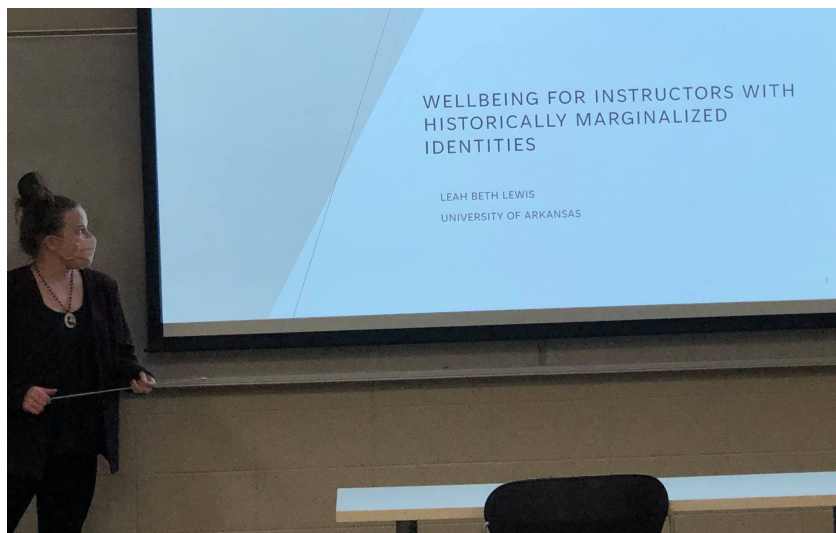
Finally, beginning late February and running through March, for the [National African American Read-In](#), the Brown Chair in English Literacy Initiative will be offering an 8-week community seminar and writing workshop on “Abolitionist Literacies.” The seminar will be co-facilitated by Stephanie Keene, most recently Program Manager at [Haverford College's Center for Peace and Global Citizenship](#), and Dustin Gibson, the Access, Disability, and Language Justice Coordinator at [PeoplesHub](#).

Meeting virtually, this seminar will explore recent works and community education programs that articulate the meanings of abolition historically and contemporarily to engage in rigorous study and practice of what abolition offers to move away from structures and institutions that are unjust so that we might reimagine the world in ways that are humane. To center access, reading assignments will include a range of media such as book excerpts, articles and essays, videos, and podcasts. Writing assignments and other responses to prompts from the co-facilitators will also be delivered in various formats. Further information on the seminar and how to register is forthcoming.

To learn more about events being offered or sponsored by the Brown Chair in English Literacy Initiative in 2022, and how to participate in them, follow the program's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/uarkbrownchair/>. You can also reach the Brown Chair in English Literacy via email at [brownlit@uark.edu](mailto:brownlit@uark.edu).

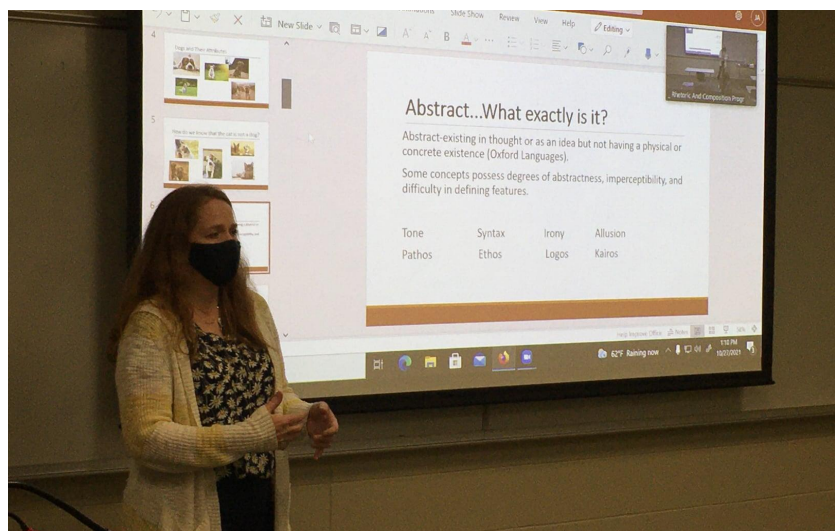
## News from the Office of Rhetoric and Composition

This past fall, the Office of Rhetoric and Composition once again offered a wonderful series of workshops focused on the teaching of writing. Five graduate instructors presented on a range of valuable topics. We want to thank all of the presenters (see below) and to Interim Director Adam Pope, Assistant Director LewEllyn Hallett, and Graduate Assistant (and doctoral candidate) Chris Borntrager for organizing, advertising, and supporting the following collection of talks.



“Wellbeing for Instructors with Historically Marginalized Identities” was presented by doctoral candidate **Leah Beth Lewis** on Oct. 20th.

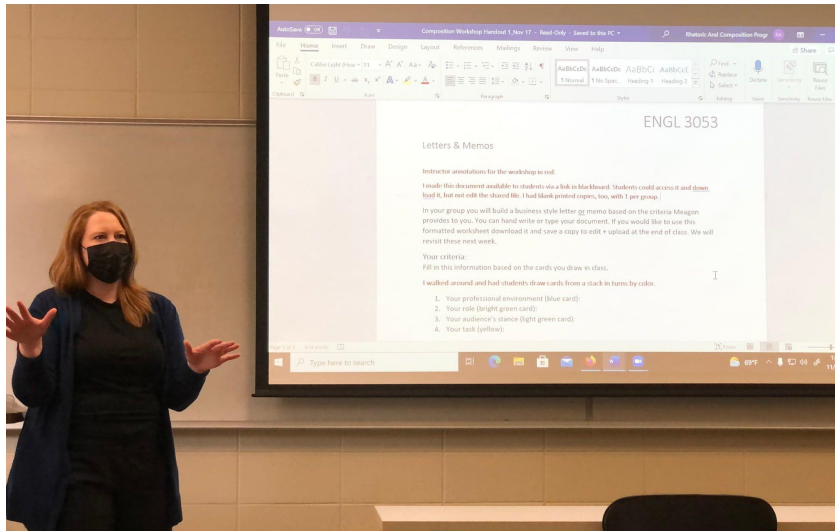
“Using Concrete Images to Facilitate Abstract Concept Learning” was presented by second-year M.A. student **Jessica Allee** on Oct. 27th.



“No Fuss Citation Instruction” was presented by second-year Ph.D. student **Tiffany Elder** on Nov. 3rd.

“Teaching about Genres with Adaptations” was presented by third-year Ph.D. student **Gracie Bain** on Nov. 10th.





“Bridging Rhetorical Analysis to Genre Awareness” was presented by doctoral candidate (now recent doctoral graduate) **Meagon Clarkson-Guyll** on Nov. 17th.

## News from the Program in Creative Writing and Translation

*The Arkansas International* has won the 2021 Whiting Literary Magazine Prize, which includes an award of nearly \$15,000 and capacity building mentorship over three years. Magazine founder Professor Geoff Brock says, “[Issue 10] actually includes new work by *\*four\** alums: **Toby [Tobias Wray]** has two poems (including the title poem from the new book), **Anne Greott** has a translation from Italian of a story by Antonio Morescu, **Sy Hoahwah** has a poem, and **Toshiya Kamei** has a translation from Spanish of a story by Elaine Vilar Madruga.”

Fourth-year poets **Karstin Johnson** and **Hiba Tahir** as well as Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies doctoral candidate **Kaveh Bassiri** have been awarded Individual Fellowship Awards for their work by the Arkansas Arts Council.

Recent alum **J. Bailey Hutchinson** has been awarded the 2022 Miller Williams Poetry Prize. The University of Arkansas Press will publish *Gut*, selected for the prize by series editor Patricia Smith, in 2022.

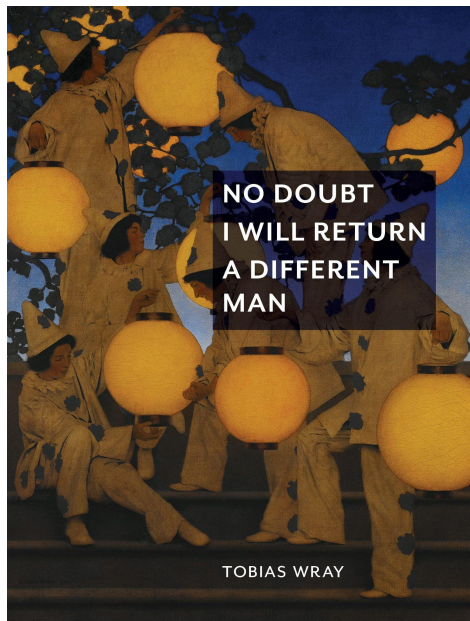
Second-year poet **Elizabeth Muscari** has been recognized by the university’s Graduate-Professional Student Congress with the Alex Marino Service Award.



**Elizabeth Muscari**

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Fourth-year fiction writer **Mackenzie McGee** won a PEN/Robert J. Dau Short Story Prize for Emerging Writers for her story “Re: Frankie,” which appears in the *Best Debut Short Stories 2021* anthology. Mackenzie’s terrific Pushcart Prize-nominated story was originally published in *Porter House Review*.



Cover image of Tobias Wray’s recently published collection of poems

Fourth-year fiction writer **Alys Dutton** has been awarded funding for research and writing from the Elizabeth George Foundation.

Professor **Padma Viswanathan’s** translation of Graciliano Ramos’s *Sao Bernardo* (NYRB 2020) was shortlisted for the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize in the United Kingdom in April.

Alum **Tobias Wray’s** collection *No Doubt I Will Return a Different Man* was chosen by judge Randall Mann as the winner of the CSU Poetry Center’s 2020 Lighthouse Poetry Series contest and was just published on October 5th, 2021.

Doctoral candidate in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies **Kaveh Bassiri** and Visiting Assistant Professor **Jennifer Croft** have both been awarded Tulsa Artist Fellowships for 2021-2023.

Third-year poet **Vasantha Sambamurti** and recent graduate **Rome Hernández Morgan** were both awarded Critical Language Scholarships (CLS).

Current M.F.A. in poetry students **Robin Bruce** and **Karstin Johnson** as well as M.F.A. alumni **Willi Carlisle** (poetry '14) and **Jane V. Blunschi** (fiction '16) all received Artists 360 Awards for 2021.

In addition, M.F.A. in poetry student **Elizabeth Muscari** was noted by Artists 360 as an outstanding student grant finalist.

Finally, Professor **Geoff Brock** has been awarded the 2021 National Translation Award in Poetry for his translation from Italian of “Allegria” by Giuseppe Ungaretti.



Clockwise from top left: Jane Blunschi, Robin Bruce, Willi Carlisle, and Karstin Johnson.  
Photos by Kat Wilson.

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

A number of current graduate students in English received awards or were acknowledged for specific achievements this past fall:

- English doctoral student **Gracie Bain** received a Bridge Fellowship Award from the Gender Studies Program on the University of Arkansas campus.
- Second-year master's student **Michael Menase** had an essay accepted by the journal *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*. His paper, "'Unkinged' King Richard's Sense of Self in *Richard II*," will be published in October of 2023 (Volume 36).
- English doctoral candidate **Ann Riley-Adams** participated in the SEC Emerging Scholars Career Preparation Workshop, hosted virtually by Louisiana State University.

Four doctoral students also successfully defended their dissertations:

- **Ebtesam Alawfi** defended "Diversifying Woolf's Room: Private Spaces and Creativity in the Works of Willa Cather, Kate Chopin, Gayl Jones, and Alice Walker." Dr. Susan Marren directed.
- **Meagon Clarkson-Guyll** defended "Mapping the Pathways to Campus Writing Sites: Implications for Writing Program Administrators." Dr. David Jolliffe directed.
- **Kristen Figgins** defended "Adapting Animals: Nineteenth-Century British Literature, Science, and Media." Dr. Lissette Lopez Szwydky-Davis directed.
- **Sharla Rosenbaum** defended "Queering the Metanarrative of Domesticity: Chosen Families in Late Nineteenth-Century American Women's Literature." Dr. Susan Marren directed.

In addition, five graduate students in English presented papers at the Arkansas Philological Association's annual conference, which took place on the Arkansas State University campus in Jonesboro.



From left: doctoral candidate Samantha Meeks and master's students Abigail Ross, Ana Rodriguez-Mesa, and Braden Taylor

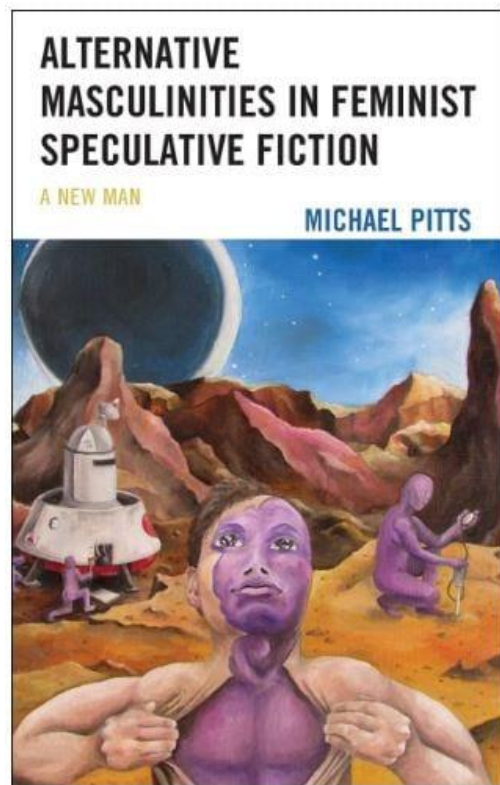


Doctoral student David Farris

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Likewise, this past fall, several graduate English alumni received awards or were acknowledged for specific achievements in their research or for their support for their communities:

- **Wyatt Paige Hermansen** (Ph.D. '16), Assistant Professor at Westfield State University, co-hosted with singer Mary Lambert, at the University of Arkansas, a discussion on “Mental Health, Queer Identities, and Radical Self Love.”
- **Michael Pitts** (Ph.D. '19), an Assistant Professor at the University of South Bohemia in the Czech Republic, had his book *Alternative Masculinities in Feminist Speculative Fiction: A New Man* published by Lexington Books, an imprint of Rowman & Littlefield.
- **Rachael Price** (Ph.D. '16), an Associate Professor at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (School of Arts and Sciences), delivered a talk on Georgia author Sarah Barnwell Elliott as part of the Jess Usher Lecture Series.
- **Sara Bruns Putman** (M.A. '14), owner of Bookish (an independent bookstore in Fort Smith, Arkansas), received the Indies with Impact award from the Binc Foundation and Penguin Random House.
- **Ashley Robinson** (Ph.D. '16), founder and lead storyteller of Interrobang, received the 2021 Outstanding Instructor Award from the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.
- **Kelly Westeen** (Ph.D. '20), director of University Perspectives and College Learning for the Student Success Center at the University of Arkansas, received the Big of the Year award from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Arkansas.



Cover image of Michael Pitts's recently published book

Graduate English faculty members who recently received awards or were noted for their achievements include the following:

- **Dr. Constance Bailey** and Dr. Vox Jo Hsu (University of Texas at Austin) have launched a new podcast about their experiences on the tenure track called *Unpack This!*
- **Dr. Mohja Kahf's** poetry is featured in the recent anthology *New Moons: Contemporary Writing by North American Muslims*, published by Red Hen Press.
- **Dr. Casey Kayser** and Dr. Tricia Starks (Department of History) were awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Teaching Institute grant for \$170,000 for their project “Pandemics in History, Literature, and Today.”

- **Dr. Adam Pope** and alum **Dr. Sara West** (Ph.D. '18) (San Jose State University) recently published an article, "Rubles and Rhetoric: Corporate Kairos and Social Media's Crisis of Common Sense," in the journal *Present Tense: A Journal of Rhetoric in Society*.
- **Dr. Eric Darnell Pritchard** spoke on a panel about the contributions of Black LGBTQ+ people to fashion that was part of a symposium hosted by the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture: "Fashion, Culture, Futures: African American Ingenuity, Activism, and Storytelling."
- **Dr. Joshua Smith** and Dr. Daniela D'Eugenio (Department of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures) arranged for the university's membership in the Newberry Library's Center for Renaissance Studies Consortium.
- **Dr. Sean Teuton** was awarded a Master Researcher Award by the College of Arts and Sciences.
- **Dr. Lora Walsh** was chosen as one of two 2020-2021 recipients of the Junior Scholar Grant from the Southwest Commission on Religious Studies.

Finally, the Graduate Program in English would like to thank all of the program alumni who participated in the speaker panel events (see below) that were offered to current students this past fall.

## "Corporate Careers for Humanities Students" Virtual Speaker Panel Event

**\*\*Monday, Oct. 18th, 3:05-4:20 pm.\*\***



**Mia Edwards**  
(English M.A. '14)  
Product Development & Sourcing Manager at Walmart



**Jamie Hall**  
(English M.A. '07)  
Director of Customer Solutions at ArcBest



**Jackie Lawrence**  
(English M.A. '12)  
Inclusion Strategy Director at J.B. Hunt Transport Services



**Ash Shackelford**  
(English M.A. '10)  
Web Content Manager at Tyson Foods



**Elizabeth Stainton Walker**  
(English M.A. '13)  
Senior Manager, Digital Strategy & Brand Engagement at Walmart



**Ian Whitlow**  
(English M.A. '12)  
Creative Strategist at Tyson Foods

Undergraduates can register for event here: <https://app.joinhandshake.com/events/855768>  
Graduate students have been sent the Zoom link through the graduate student listserv.

Event Hosted by



**UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS**

**The Department of English**

Student Affairs  
Career Development Center

## DIVERSE CAREERS FOR ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENTS

### A Virtual Speaker Panel Event

**\*\*Monday, Nov. 8th, 4:45-5:50 p.m. CST\*\***



**Alex Abrams** (M.A. '15)  
Communications and Marketing Specialist at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro



**Luke Carothers** (M.A. '18)  
Content Specialist/Editor at Zweig Group



**Coty Darst** (M.A. '19)  
HEI Program Coordinator at the University of Arkansas



**Robert Ellis** (M.A. '18)  
Career Counselor - College of Education & Health Professions at the University of Arkansas



**Katie Smith Green** (M.A. '14)  
Content Marketing Manager at Current Health



**Marisa Grippo** (M.A. '15)  
Registrar at Southern Arkansas University



**Kim Marquez** (M.A. '18)  
Communications Specialist at Legal Aid of Arkansas



**Myles Melancon** (M.A. '17)  
Corporate and Foundation Gift Manager at Millsaps College

Graduate students have been sent the Zoom link through the graduate student listserv.

**Note:** We would also like to thank the following graduate students and alumni for participating in the 2021 Graduate Internship in English speaker panel event (10/11/21): **Jessica Allee, Dana Blair, Sarah Browning** (Creative Writing), **David Cajias, Sara Putman, Emilija Sarma** (CLCS), and **Liza Vammen**.

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# Updates from the GSE Organization

The Graduate Students in English (GSE) Organization has been incredibly busy so far this year with providing support to the graduate student community, organizing social events, fundraising, and making plans for its interdisciplinary conference coming up in the spring.

Current officers and the faculty advisor for the GSE are pictured below.



Back row left to right are Olivia Jorgensen (M.A. Liaison), Dana Blair (Historian/Secretary), Michel LaCrue (Vice President), and Professor Mohja Kahf (Faculty Advisor); front row left to right are Jesse Greenhill (Ph.D. Liaison) with Petals, Angelena Pierce (Media Development Director), Mayssa Hashaad (CLCS Liaison), and Gracie Bain (President).



From left: Jessica Allee (Rhetoric and Composition Office Liaison), Skye Oliver (Student-Faculty Liaison), Lucy Shapiro (M.F.A. Liaison), and Ann Riley-Adams (Treasurer)



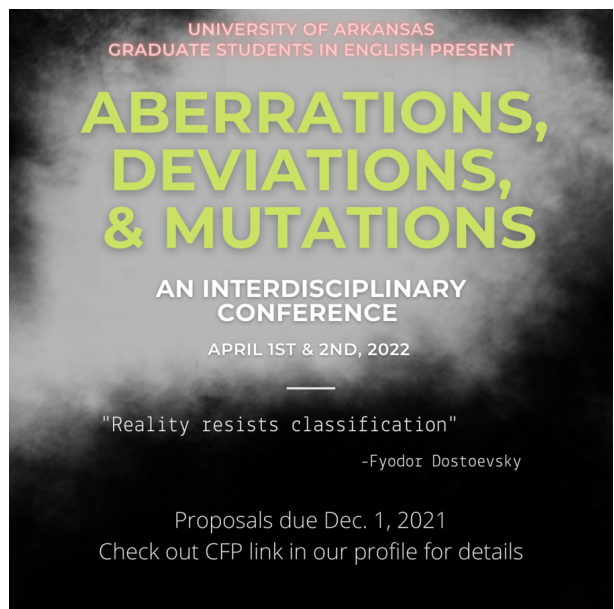


The GSE organized and offered a Student-Faculty Shindig at the beginning of fall semester, allowing for faculty and graduate students to get together, eat, and visit at Wilson Park. (See the pictures above.)

Another event, an Autumn Hangout, took place later in the fall, also at Wilson Park, as a chance for graduate students from all degrees to socialize over snacks and hot beverages.

The GSE officers held regular meetings throughout the fall semester, and Gracie Bain and Michel LaCrué (GSE President and Vice President, respectively) attended a Diversity Training session regarding student advising in the English Department with members of the department's faculty and directors of several university DEI offices.

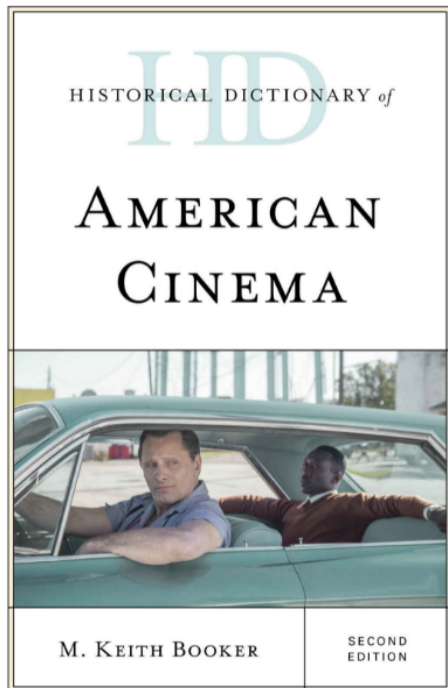
Toward the end of the fall semester, the GSE also fundraised by holding a Book and Bake Sale in Kimpel Hall and advertised the call for proposals for their spring conference. (See the images below.)



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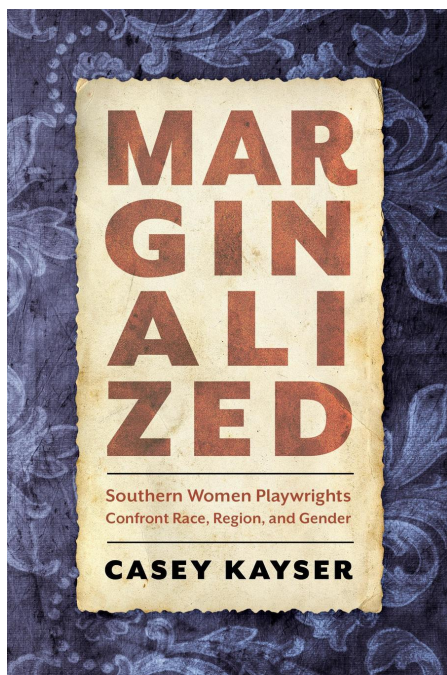
# Faculty Publications

As we conclude the Fall 2021 department newsletter, we list below the most recently published books either written or edited by members of our department faculty, with links to their pages on Amazon.



## ***Historical Dictionary of American Cinema, Second Edition, by M. Keith Booker***

*Historical Dictionary of American Cinema, Second Edition* was published by Rowman and Littlefield in June of 2021.



## ***Marginalized: Southern Women Playwrights Confront Race, Region, and Gender, by Casey Kayser***

*Marginalized: Southern Women Playwrights Confront Race, Region, and Gender* was published by University Press of Mississippi in August of 2021.

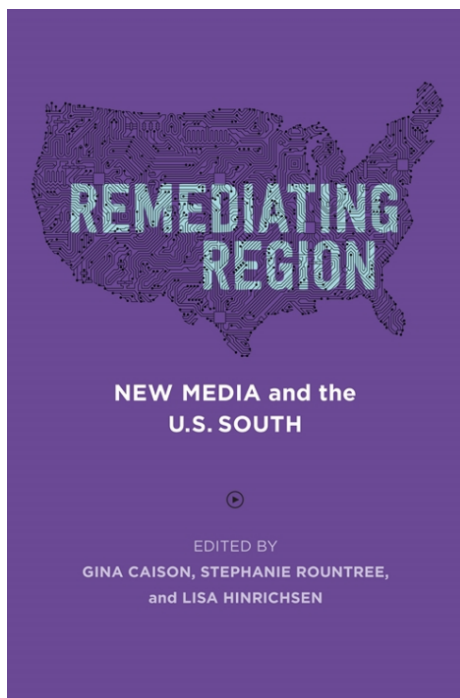
Read the [recent \*NewsWire\* article](#) on Professor Kayser's book, which won the 2021 Eudora Welty Prize.



***Remote Access: Small Public Libraries in Arkansas*, written by Sabine Schmidt and Don House and edited by Robert Cochran**

*Remote Access: Small Public Libraries* was published by the University of Arkansas Press in November of 2021.

Read the [recent \*NewsWire\* article](#) on the book launch event that took place on November 18th.



***Remediating Region: New Media and the U.S. South*, edited by Gina Caison, Stephanie Rountree, and Lisa Hinrichsen**

*Remediating Region: New Media and the U.S. South* was published by the Louisiana State University Press in December of 2021.

Read the [recent \*NewsWire\* article](#) on this book, the second one to be edited by Hinrichsen, Rountree, and Caison.

# Stay Connected

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