



Musings

Fall 2017 Newsletter
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Northwestern

Department of
English

WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

FROM THE CHAIR

It has been another *extremely* busy year for the English Department! As described in better detail on the facing page, we have added a simply extraordinary trio of colleagues to the Department's faculty: Natasha Trethewey (two term Poet Laureate of the U.S. and a Pulitzer Prize winner); Tristram Wolff (specialist in 18th-/19th-Century British literature, Comparative and Transatlantic Romanticisms, and environmental humanities); and, in happy collaboration with the Asian American Studies Program where she holds a joint appointment, Michelle Huang (specialist in contemporary Asian American literature, posthumanism, and feminist science studies). We saw a new degree program, an MFA+MA (in creative writing and English literature), through the long approval process. This program will create new bridges between these two parts of our operations, and we will be conducting the first round of admissions for it this season. The Department also completed a major Self Study and external review process, which was the source of enormous encouragement about our strengths and trajectory and also of new and creative prompts for us to think ourselves and our programs forward, into what will -- soon enough! -- be the middle part of the 21st century. It's been a very good year for us!

Laurie Shannon
Franklyn Bliss Snyder Professor of Literature



A WORD FROM EGSO

As Evanston prepares for winter we would like to take a moment to think back over the year past. We began the 2016-2017 academic year with our annual Fall Collation, during which Department Chair Laurie Shannon welcomed us back and gave us counsel on the importance of monotasking—nurturing the deep concentration necessary to do work well. Professor Julia Stern discussed race in Bette Davis's filmography, while graduate student Nora Eltahawy presented transnational anti-war poetry in Arab-American anthologies.

One major focus of the fall quarter was welcoming incoming graduate students warmly into our midst. Before the quarter began, we paired all first-years with peer mentors from upper classes, and hosted our first-year breakfast to share institutional wisdom. Last year's colloquia, organized quarterly by our students-in-coursework representative, Ilana Larkin, included a scintillating lineup of presentations by Sarah Mason, Will Pierce, Anne Boemler, Maria Dikcis, Uta Ayala, and Bonnie Etherington.

Students-in-candidacy rep Erin Andrews organized an extremely useful series of professionalization workshops that provided opportunities to develop a range of useful skills. In the fall, Professor Helen Thompson, along with graduate students Sarah Roth and Alanna Hickey, gave advice on finding fellowships and navigating the application process. In the winter, Professors Eula Biss, Nick Davis, and Kelly Wisecup talked about their own experiences bridging their research and teaching with public engagement, and shared thoughts on how to mesh academics and activism. In the spring, Professors Wendy Wall and Susie Phillips and graduate student Kara Johnson talked about developing a teaching persona, and reflected on how to narrate our teaching experiences for the job market. This year, students-in-candidacy rep Delali Kumavie has arranged a series of practical and thought-provoking workshops. The first, held this October, focused on collaborative writing and teaching, and was led by Professors John Alba Cutler, Brian Edwards, and Tristram Wolff and graduate student Chad Infante. Upcoming workshops will discuss applying for fellowship and postdoc positions and planning summer projects.

A major highlight of our programming was the Salon Series, now in its third year. Once a quarter, we invite faculty and grad students to join us in reading a short article and use it as the starting point for a relaxed, congenial discussion. Last year, salon discussions unofficially centered on the challenges of teaching in a politically volatile time. We discussed articles on the importance of transcendence in undergraduate pedagogy; on rethinking categories of race in premodern England; and on the uses of popular fiction in thinking through the modern political moment. This fall, our first salon of the year took up a recent debate on the place of digital humanities in English departments, prompting an in-depth discussion of different paths of humanities research.

As always, none of this could have happened without the help and support of our colleagues—faculty and graduate student alike—who contributed their time and expertise to make such interesting events possible. And endless thanks are owed to Jennifer Britton, Kathy Daniels, Dave Kuzel, and Nathan Mead—without their patient support and friendly advice, we would all be in perpetual crisis. We are immensely grateful to work alongside such generous mentors and colleagues. We wish you all an engaging and rewarding new year!

Samantha Botz and Katie Blankenau, Co-Chairs
Delali Kumavie, Students-in-Candidacy Representative
Nina Moon, Students-in-Coursework Representative
Brad Dubos, Archivist

NEW FACULTY

Michelle N. Huang (Ph.D. English and Women's Studies, The Pennsylvania State University), jointly appointed in the English Department and the Asian American Studies Program, has research and teaching interests in contemporary Asian American literature, posthumanism, and feminist science studies. Her current project, "Molecular Aesthetics: Race, Form, and Matter in Contemporary Asian American Literature," examines posthumanist aesthetics in post-1965 Asian American literature to trace racial formation at the molecular scale. Through analyses of works by Ruth Ozeki, Larissa Lai, Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, Julie Otsuka, and Jeffrey Yang, among others, "Molecular Aesthetics" argues that a rapprochement with scientific discourse is necessary to fully grasp how the formal and aesthetic qualities of Asian American literature unsettle sedimented structures of racial formation. Michelle's work appears in *Twentieth-Century Literature*, *Journal of Asian American Studies*, *Amerasia*, and *Post 45: Contemporaries*, among other venues. During the Fall 2017 quarter, she taught an upper-level undergraduate course on "Techno-Orientalism."



Natasha Trethewey served two terms as the 19th Poet Laureate of the United States (2012-2014). She is the author of four collections of poetry, *Domestic Work* (2000), *Bellocq's Ophelia* (2002), *Native Guard* (2006)—for which she was awarded the 2007 Pulitzer Prize—and *Thrall*, (2012). In 2010 she published a book of non-fiction, *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast*. She is the recipient of fellowships from the Academy of American Poets, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Beinecke Library at Yale, and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard. In 2013 she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2017 received the 22nd Heinz Award for Arts and Humanities. The award, established by Theresa Heinz in honor of her late husband Senator John Heinz, seeks to "recognize the individual creator, as well as those who best preserve, teach, interpret, and advance this spirit of curiosity and faith in the power of the human mind."



Tristram Wolff (Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley) specializes in 18th-/19th-Century British literature, Comparative and Transatlantic Romanticisms, critical theory, poetry and poetics, and the environmental humanities. His current book project, "Frail Bonds: Romantic Etymology and Language Ecology," describes a poetics emerging from transatlantic Romanticism that transported the origins of language from the depths of the past to an ongoing present, in answer to an ethnocentric Enlightenment primitivism. Through readings of Herder, Blake, Wordsworth, and Thoreau, among others, it retrieves a chapter lost in familiar narratives of the long nineteenth century's shifts in "nature" as a category of thought. Wolff's articles have appeared or are forthcoming in *Essays in Romanticism*, *European Romantic Review*, *Representations*, *English Literary History*, and *PMLA*. In 2018, he will participate in *New Literary History's* "Romanticism"-themed special issue and symposium, celebrating the journal's 50th year. During Fall 2017, taught "Blake's Afterlives,"

run in parallel with the Block Museum's exhibit, "William Blake and the Age of Aquarius," and in Winter 2018 he will be teaching a course on "Natural Languages and Green Worlds."

NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS

O moyemi Ajisebutu (Ph.D. – CLS) received her B.A. in English Literature with a minor in Social Studies from the Tai Solarin University of Education in Nigeria, and recently earned her M.A. in English with a concentration in Literature from New Mexico Highlands University. Omoyemi's thesis was titled *Removing the Sixth Mountain: Friendship and Inclusion in West African Women's Fiction*. Omoyemi's interests seem sort of all over the place after completing her thesis, but she is interested in postcolonial feminist theory, West African literature, and orality in pre-colonial gender narratives especially in Southwestern Nigeria.

Kaitlin Browne (Ph.D.) completed her master's degree in Literature at Eastern Michigan University in 2017. Her M.A. thesis interrogates the (dis)appearance of the plague in the *Canterbury Tales* using a medical humanities framework, which includes natural science, textual magic, and the power of the female imagination. In addition to medical humanities, her scholarly interests include the construction of race in the middle ages, corporeal literacy, sociolinguistics, authorial theory, and digital humanities.

Philip Ellefson (Ph.D.) graduated from the University of Portland in 2015 with a B.A. in English. His senior honors thesis explored the influence of the American West and manifest destiny on Walt Whitman's poems and journals. His research interests include mid-19th- to early 20th-century American literature, Whitman studies, border studies, and ecocriticism. Since completing his undergraduate studies, Philip has been doing social services work. He worked for a year with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps serving the refugee population in Milwaukee, WI, and before moving to the Chicagoland area spent time working with people experiencing homelessness in Seattle, WA.

Harrison Graves (Ph.D.) is from Philadelphia, PA. He received his B.A. in English at the University of Maryland College Park in 2014 and his M.A. from the University of Delaware in 2016, with particular interests in late 19th- and 20th-century African-American literature. During his time at the University of Delaware, Harrison served as a researcher and committee co-chair for the award-winning digital

humanities project, the Colored Conventions Project (CCP). His research interests include the intersections of race, spatial confinement, and spectacular punishment as represented in 19th- and 20th-century prison literature, narratives of confinement, and visual and print culture.

Patricia Gschwendner (DAAD) is an international student who comes to the English department as a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) scholar. At her home institution, the University of Wurzburg, she is enrolled in a teacher training program, majoring in English and French. Within the scope of her 2016 state exam thesis in linguistics, she developed classifications for the different ways of constructing puns in issues of the French comic *Asterix*. They proved valid for other languages as well, and she was invited to the *Forum Junge Romanistik* to present these results to an international audience of young researchers in all areas of Romance studies. Her current academic interests involve expanding on her linguistic point of view by investigating humour from a literary and cultural perspective.

Anne (Annie) Osenbaugh (M.A.) received her B.A. in English from Reed College in 2016. Her senior thesis at Reed examined death's role in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, culminating in a reframing of Jane's flight from Thornfield as a descent into the Greco-Roman Underworld. Her other literary interests include the Victorian Gothic, the epic's dynamic relationship with the modern novel, the author as a character/meta narrative, and Anglo-Saxon poetry. She has also published several short stories,

focusing on horror and magical realism, in the *Underground* magazine.

Jessica Ramirez (Ph.D.) graduated from Cornell University with a B.A. in English and Spanish. Her research interests include race, ethnicity, and postcolonial studies within the context of literature, cultural studies, and cultural theory. With regard to research, she wishes to take an interdisciplinary approach, focusing on the Caribbean archipelago in relation to transatlantic studies. Her intellectual concerns deal with gender, identity construction, magical realism, and the Gothic, especially as portrayed through U.S. Latino literatures, multiethnic American poetry, and contemporary American literature.

Adam Syvertsen (Ph.D.) is a graduate of DePaul University in Chicago where he earned his B.A. in English Literature. At DePaul, he completed an honors thesis which brings Ecomaterialist theory to the poetry of Walt Whitman, arguing that Whitman reimagines not just the boundaries of the *body politic*, but also the nature of the corporeal integrity of *material bodies*, and in doing so, begins to de-center the human subject and collapse boundaries between humans and the other-than-human-world. Adam's research focuses are interdisciplinary, located at the intersection of 19th-century American Literature and the History and Philosophy of Science. He has presented research at some of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment conferences and the Midwest Modern Language Association convention, and has a forthcoming conference review in *ESQ*,

Tyler Talbott (Ph.D.) received his B.A. in English at the University of Missouri and his M.A. at the University of Maryland. His M.A. capstone compares George Eliot with Scottish-Australian emigrant Catherine Helen Spence in order to read the provincialisms of Eliot's novels in the context of mid-19th-century gendered emigration and revolutions in transportation. The work he intends to pursue as a doctoral student involves similar pairings of canonical and colonial texts that challenge assumptions about the Victorian novel. Tyler's research interests include the global/transnational circulation of novels, the



NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS CONTINUED

history of the British Empire, and women and colonial novelists.

Anna Zalokostas (Ph.D.) received her B.A. in 2010 from Swarthmore College, where she focused on the aesthetics and politics of 20th-century avant-garde writing by women. She has since worked in various fields of the book industry, including small press publishing, online archives, and, most recently, as a bookseller and used book buyer. Her current

research interests center on the connections between aesthetic, affective and ecological atmosphere in 20th- and 21st-century literature.

Wenhan Zhan (Ph.D. – CLS) received his B.A. and M.A. degrees in English Literature from Peking University in Beijing, China. His M.A. thesis investigated the prevalent use of geometrical symbolism in medieval literature, mainly in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and the *Divine Comedy*. In addition,

Wenhan attended the French language courses at Sciences Po in Paris, as well as a one-year Master's exchange program at Meiji University in Tokyo. Besides his current academic focus on medieval literature, Wenhan's research interests also include the interaction between political philosophy and literature; 19th-century American literature; Shakespearean drama; and existential novels.

DISSERTATIONS

Meghan Costa (Ph.D.)

Early Modern Knowledge Problems: Race and Epistemology in the Seventeenth-Century English Imagination

Nora Eltahawy (Ph.D.)

Writing War, Writing Place: Military History and Domestic Politics in Arab American Literature

Aaron Greenberg (Ph.D.)

Early Modern Matters of Life and Death

Kara Johnson (Ph.D.)

Penelopian Figures: Narratives of Work and Resistance in American Literature, 1840-1900

Sarah Roth (Ph.D.)

An Interesting Condition: Reproduction and the Un-Domestication of the Victorian Novel

Elizabeth Sterzinger (Ph.D.)

Demarcations in Space: Modernist Poetry and the Imprint of Architecture, 1910-1950

Seth Swanner (Ph.D.)

Quartering the Wind: Early Modern Nature at the Fringe of Politics

Tanushree Vachharajani (Ph.D.)

Unearthing Subaltern Agency: Exploring the Voice of Marginalized Populations in Contemporary Indian Literature

JOB PLACEMENT

Becky Fall (Ph.D. 2016) recently started a two-year position as a Mellon/ACLS Public Postdoctoral Fellow at the Public Theater in New York.

During the 2017-18 academic year, **Alanna Hickey** (Ph.D. 2016) will be at the Stanford University Humanities Center as a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship of Scholars in the Humanities, having deferred to 2018 the beginning of a tenure-track position as an Assistant Professor at Yale University.

Beginning in December, **Hosanna Krienke** (Ph.D. 2016) will be a Postdoctoral Research Assistant for the Oxford University Faculty of English Language and Literature Department's Diseases of Modern Life: Nineteenth Century Perspectives project.

Tara Rodman (Ph.D. 2017) recently began a tenure-track appointment in the Drama Department at UC Irvine.

[SIC!] SUMMER INSTITUTE COLOGNE



Northwestern's Summer Institute Cologne, [sic!], just completed its fifth year of inspiring and challenging academic exchange. Once again, English department doctoral students and faculty took part. [sic!] is cosponsored by Northwestern and the University of Cologne and held annually at Schloß Wahn, a castle on the outskirts of the Cologne where the University of Cologne houses its extraordinary theatre collection, the Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung. Over the years, graduate students from four continents have met for seminars on early modern studies, classical studies, theatre historiography, game studies, hip hop, queer reproduction, media, and sound studies. Seminars revolve around annual themes, including this year's "Belief/Believe."

At its core, [sic!] regularizes important forms of interdisciplinary exchange between Northwestern and the University of Cologne. (Northwestern has also two hosted wintertime symposia, welcoming faculty, postdocs, and students from Cologne to campus. One of these, on the philosopher Hans Blumenberg, was organized by Professor Will West.) The summer school format emphasizes collaboration: seminars are co-taught by two faculty members, one from Northwestern and one from the University of Cologne. Over a two-week period, faculty co-teach seminars at Schloß Wahn and organize related excursions throughout the region. The English Department has been at the forefront of this collaborative relationship. Professor Tracy C. Davis is one of the institute's cofounders and directors, and has taught a Theatre Studies seminar with her University of Cologne counterpart, Professor Peter Marx, since the program's inception. Other English faculty have brought diverse course offerings, for example Professor Kasey Evans co-led a seminar on Early Modernism in 2015, while in 2016 Professors Nick Davis and Ivy Wilson co-taught courses on "Queer Becomings" and "Urbanism and Hip Hop," respectively.

Our English graduate students, their attendance funded by the department, testify to how [sic!] supports their development. For example, Susanna Sacks is an English graduate student who used the Institute as an opportunity to learn about a burgeoning field, sound studies, finding interlocutors for her re-

search. Reflecting on her experiences at the institute in 2016, she wrote, "[sic!] allowed me to explore a field of study related to my project but which I had previously encountered only peripherally." For other students, such as Erin Andrews, who took part in Nick Davis' seminar in 2016 and then the Visual Narration seminar in 2017, [sic!] helped them delve into a field: "It gave me the opportunity to think deeply about the scholarly conversations that my dissertation research opens into, while drawing on the insights of other students whose work has similar investments." Similarly, Maria Dikcis, who took part in Ivy Wilson's seminar on urbanism and hip hop, wrote, "I fully intend to incorporate material I learned in my seminar...into my future dissertation research. This material not only sparked new insights and pathways for discovery within me, but also renewed my conviction that academic work is just flat out fun." Maria's last sentiment echoes the most common refrain about [sic!] from students and faculty. The institute is intensive, but it is also a lot of fun, and the social program is part of what makes [sic!] so memorable to both its student and faculty.

Looking ahead, planning for Summer Institute Cologne 2018 is well under way, and it promises to be one of its most successful years yet! The theme will be "Construction Sites." A call for applications will go out to students at Northwestern and around the world early in the new year.

[sic!] is generously sponsored by The Graduate School, the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, and Office of the Provost.

Tracy C. Davis
Barber Professor of Performing Arts
Professor, Theatre, English, and Performance Studies
Director, Excellence in Mentoring Initiative



Participants in the 2017 [sic!] program, including our Professor Nick Davis, English Department doctoral candidate Erin Andrews (second and third from the left), along with recent and former NU graduate students in Art History, History, and Screen Cultures.

LOOKING BACK ON FUTURES

10 years of Northwestern English students at the Dartmouth Institute

This summer marked the tenth anniversary of a collaboration between Northwestern's English program and the renowned Futures of American Studies Institute. Since 2007, advanced graduate students pursuing Americanist projects have been attending the week-long institute, which is held each June on the campus of Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH.

To date, 23 Northwestern graduate students, fully funded by Northwestern, have attended and participated in the Institute. The initiative is coordinated by Brian Edwards, under the auspices of the Globalizing American Studies project.

Students who have completed coursework are eligible to apply to attend the Institute. A selection committee comprised of Americanist faculty review applications. The selection process is competitive.

The Futures Institute itself is an innovative program geared toward advanced graduate students and assistant professors. It is built on two equally important pillars. First, the Institute hosts a rich series of talks through the week delivered by plenary speakers who represent major and emerging directions in American Studies. These scholars both ask provocative questions about the state of the field and model cutting edge scholarship. Second, students have a daily seminar within which their own work and work of their peers is discussed intensely. These seminars are led by Institute faculty, themselves leading scholars, who spend the week at Dartmouth. The visiting plenary speakers attend seminars during the days of their own visits.

Donald Pease, the founding director, highlights this double approach as key to the Institute's design. Pease writes: "Our vision...is to present students with the highest quality scholarship from leaders in the field, while simultaneously providing a forum for the discussion of student work that brings these academic leaders and students into a shared space of mutual inquiry."

Northwestern students report that their experiences have been positive, in some cases professionally transformative. The highlight for many students is the seminar. Sara Černe, who attended in June 2017, brought her dissertation prospectus to workshop. "The enthusiasm with which my prospectus was received and the critical questions about my methodology were extremely helpful," Černe said. "I'm sure that both will have an impact on how I approach the drafting of my first chapter."

Nora Eltahawy, who attended in 2016, attributes the success of the Institute to the design of the seminar. "The number one thing that stands out for me about the Dartmouth experience was the way the various group sessions were structured," she comments. Eltahawy continued: "I had never been in a conference setting where I met with the same group of people every day; it put our various contributions in conversation in a way that shorter, hour-long panels can't."

Those professional connections lived on. Eltahawy, who completed her dissertation in 2017 and is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in the English Department, says: "Everyone in my group found each other online after we left Dartmouth. I think of many of them as friends now, and several have gotten in touch to ask if I'd like to participate in conference panels they were putting together." She adds: "It's been a much longer-standing opportunity for professional networking than I expected."

Others have found the ability to connect with leaders in the field of American literary studies useful. Antonio Papanikolas, who attended in 2016, commented on the strength of the visiting faculty: "Being afforded the opportunity to attend so many lectures addressing such a wide array of questions and problems in American Studies helped me better understand where my dissertation work is situated in the field."

Northwestern students have gone on to make valuable professional contacts from these meetings. In several cases, such networks have helped them as they entered the job market and connected them with venues for publication.

Two years ago, in 2015, recognizing that American Studies research and scholarship is happening in several places at the university, the project was expanded to include Ph.D. students in the African American Studies Department and the Rhetoric and Public Culture Ph.D. Program, which resides in the Department of Communication Studies. This in turn made the selection process yet more competitive. At the same time, thanks to more fundraising, we were able to increase the number of awards (full funding for tuition, room, and board, plus travel to Dartmouth). In 2015, the number of fellowships increased from two to three per year. In 2017, we were able to provide funding for four graduate students.

After 10 years, the collaboration has born much fruit, with alumni of the program in a variety of tenure-track positions and producing work that shows what the next generation of work in American studies will look like. Going to Dartmouth in June has become something of a tradition among the Americanist cohort—one we are proud to mention to prospective Americanists during our recruiting and which we hope will continue for at least another decade.

Brian Edwards
Crown Professor in Middle East Studies
Professor of English, Comparative Literary
Studies, and American Studies

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES A NEW GRADUATE DUAL-DEGREE PROGRAM

After nearly forty years of teaching undergraduate creative writing with great success, graduating acclaimed authors such as fiction writers Dan Chaon ('86), Veronica Roth ('10), Karen Russell ('03), Kate Walbert ('85) and YZ Chin ('07), poets Heidi Steidlmayer ('92) and Evie Shockley ('88), nonfiction writers Jeannie Vanasco ('06) and Nick Reding ('94), editor and writer Nitsuh Abebe ('99), songwriter Jeremy Bass ('02), and others, the department is launching a new graduate program, the Litowitz Creative Writing Graduate Program. This unusual dual-degree program in Creative Writing and English will give students access to the remarkable expertise and achievement of the faculty of our entire department. Funded by a generous donation from Northwestern Alumna, Jennifer Leischner Litowitz '91 and her husband, Alec Litowitz, our M.F.A. + M.A. will be the first of its kind at a top-tier university.

Our students will be those who want to integrate their study of writing with the study of literature. They will do so in seminars, workshops, and independent studies with our department's exceptional range of exceptional scholars, and our outstanding creative writing faculty (including Chris Abani, Eula Biss, Brian Bouldrey, John Bresland, Averill Curdy, Sheila Donohue, Stuart Dybek, Reginald Gibbons, Juan Martinez, Shauna Seliy, Natasha Trethewey, and Rachel Jamison Webster).

Students will complete most of the requirements for the M.A. in English during the first two years, while also taking writing workshops. At the end of the second year, students will complete a substantial scholarly or critical essay as an M.A. thesis. In the third year, students will focus primarily on their M.F.A. thesis manuscript, which will be a full draft of a book-length project in poetry, creative nonfiction or fiction. Students will take a course on creative writing pedagogy, and will serve as teaching assistants and in other capacities during some quarter. All students will receive full financial support for three academic years and two summers. During their two

summers in the program, students will work as editorial assistants at *TriQuarterly Magazine*.

One important hallmark of this program is made possible by its small size—close mentoring by the creative writing faculty. Another will be students' access to the great literary resources of the city of Chicago—reading series, bookstores, literary events at major institutions, including the Poetry Foundation and other universities, and the art museums, music venues, and other resources of the artistic culture of the city (and of course, the natural resources of Lake Michigan and the surrounding area).

Admissions will rotate annually through our three genres in the program, seeking applications in two of the three, each year.

Professor Reginald Gibbons, Frances Hooper Chair in the Arts and Humanities, Professor of English and Classics, and Director of the Center for the Writing Arts, will serve as the Director of Graduate Studies for the program. A new staff position, Assistant Director of Creative Writing, was created in the department in order to support the new program and continue to serve the undergraduate major and minors.

In Fall Quarter of 2018, the department will welcome its inaugural class of four M.F.A.+ M.A. students.

Jennifer Britton
Assistant Director of Creative Writing

Reginald Gibbons
Frances Hooper Chair in the Arts and Humanities
Professor of English and Classics
Director of the Center for the Writing Arts



Chris Abani



Eula Biss



Brian Bouldrey



John Bresland



Averill Curdy



Sheila Donohue



Stuart Dybek



Reginald Gibbons



Juan Martinez



Shauna Seliy



Natasha Trethewey



Rachel Jamison Webster

LAURIE SHANNON'S INVESTITURE

as the Franklyn Bliss Snyder Professor of Literature

photographs by Genie Lemieux



Susie Phillips, Nick Davis, and Katy Breen speak at the ceremony



CHARLES DEERING MCCORMICK TEACHING AWARDS

Nick Davis is named the 2017-20 Alumnae of Northwestern Teaching Professor

photographs by Matthew Kaplan Photography



Nick with Wendy Wall



Nick and English doctoral students Erin Andrews, Hannah Chaskin, and Todd Nordgren

ON NECESSITIES, LUXURIES, AND LABOR IN THE HUMANITIES

An op-ed written by Barbara Newman, originally appearing in the April 21st, 2017 issue of the Daily Northwestern

You love your lit courses—you know you do. Perhaps Dickens was your favorite: you could almost feel the London fog swirling into your lungs. Or how about that wild and crazy Chaucer class where you acted out “The Miller’s Tale”?

But *major* in English? No, you promised your parents to choose something practical, like Econ. Or after surviving Orgo, you might as well finish your pre-med curriculum. Everyone knows the humanities are just for fun anyway.

We English profs are forever trying to persuade students—and parents—that you can do more with a literature degree than mix lattes at Starbucks, while informing customers that it’s named after Captain Ahab’s first mate in *Moby-Dick*. That reminds me of Bill Bryson’s tale about an old College Bowl match between Brits and Americans. After the Brits had won by about 12,000 to two, he wondered what became of the participants—and figured the Americans were pulling in \$850,000 a year as bond traders, while the Brits were writing about the tonality of sixteenth-century choral music in Lower Silesia and wearing ratty sweaters.

If there’s a whiff of luxury about the humanities, it’s not the wealth but the pleasure they afford. Suppose Evanston’s garbage collectors went on strike for a week: everyone would know it. If all poets went on strike for a year, no one would know it. So in a world of utopian economics, garbage collectors would earn more than profs. Their work is smelly, exhausting, and necessary; ours is privileged and optional. Yet although the world would be a better place without garbage, without poetry, it would be impoverished. Defenders of the humanities are always trapped in this bind. Any single endeavor may seem trivial, yet without the humanities as such, we would have *only* trivia.

True, it would be a dull conscience that never worried about spending our best thought on art and music, poetry and fiction, while there are starving people to feed and endangered species to save. In violent times, these scruples become even more pressing. Compared to the dramatic urgency of war, the pursuits of peacetime seem idle. That is why, sixty years ago, *War and Peace* was judged a great novel and *Pride and Prejudice* a mere domestic fiction.

Yet, just as we now think differently about Austen, we need to rethink our broader suspicions.

Two days after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, my husband and I had planned to attend an academic conference. We first thought it would be cancelled—but it wasn’t, although planes were grounded. Our second thought was to cancel our own plans—but why, after all? So off we drove, joining a small, shaken band of medievalists to learn about the Greek manuscripts Theodore of Tarsus had brought from Byzantium to Canterbury in the seventh century. It all seemed extraordinarily remote, yet I found myself revisiting those old clichés about the “Dark Ages.” Whatever may have been dark in the medieval past, it was not Theodore’s monks struggling with Greek grammar. No, what was dark then is dark today—whether the killing fields are peopled by Saxons slaughtering Britons or Sunnis car-bombing Shi’ites. How much does it really matter if we kill with arrows or airplanes? About as much as it matters whether we write on parchment or screens. Our technologies enable us to do much more, much faster—but it’s the ends that count, not the means. If it’s better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness, I would sooner praise the monk copying declensions by a flickering tallow stub than the commander deploying drones by remote control.

One of the most insidious evils of violence is that it makes us think only violence matters. One gift of the humanities is to defy that law. Even after the next thousand pointless deaths, people will still care about Greek verbs and Silesian music, Captain Ahab’s quest and Elizabeth Bennet’s marriage. The historian Johan Huizinga once remarked that all culture is a form of play, and in the humanities, we find as perfect a fusion of work and play as in sports. My study of medieval literature may never give as much joy as a Cubs championship, but it gives the same *kind* of joy: no less a luxury, no less a necessity. And if I make more money than garbage collectors but less than the Cubs, so be it. Life is short; utopian economics will have to wait.

Barbara Newman
Professor of English

FACULTY NEWS

Last fall, **Katharine Breen** was appointed co-editor, with Eric Weiskott of Boston College and Alastair Bennett of Royal Holloway, University of London, of the scholarly journal *Yearbook of Langland Studies*. In the past year, she has been awed by the sheer intellectual generosity that keeps a journal like *YLS* running, especially through the process of peer review. She is also trying to figure out what to do about the much smaller number of bad actors, who benefit from others’ generosity but seem unwilling or unable to pass it on. After a three-year stint of teaching overloads and serving as Director of Undergraduate Studies

and Associate Chair, she is also hard at work on her own book on medieval allegory, and can usually be found in her office on the top floor of University Hall, alternating between staring up at the ceiling and typing furiously. Staring up at the ceiling can be very conducive to thinking!

John Alba Cutler was a faculty fellow in the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities during 2016-17, working on his current book examining Spanish-language print culture in the early twentieth-century United States. His essay “Borders and Borderlands Literature”

was published in the *Cambridge Companion to Transnational American Literature*, and a follow-up essay, “The New Border,” appeared in a critical forum in *College Literature*. He was awarded a Hewlett Diversity Initiative fellowship to redesign Introduction to 20th-Century American Literature to foreground intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and religion. He also presented papers at the MLA annual meeting, the Recovering the US-Hispanic Literature Heritage bi-annual conference, and the Stanford University Center for the Study of the Novel symposium.

FACULTY NEWS CONTINUED

In Spring 2017, **Nick Davis** received the Alumnae of Northwestern Teaching Professorship, one of the university's highest awards for pedagogy. This three-year appointment, previously held by the English Department's Susie Phillips, recognizes outstanding classroom instruction and curricular innovation. Earlier in 2017, Nick published a new essay about rape and sexual assault in David Cronenberg's cinema. This year, he will serve as program chair of the annual conference of the Society for Cinema & Media Studies, the largest international scholarly organization in his field. He continues publishing film reviews and journalism as a Contributing Editor at *Film Comment* and will serve this fall on the main competition juries at two film festivals in Chicago and Toronto.

Tracy C. Davis continues as co-director of the Summer Institute in Cologne, which sponsors a multi-disciplinary seminars on humanities and arts topics. In 2018, the theme will be "Construction Sites" (approx. 27 August through 7 September). Entering its sixth year, this event attracts graduate students from around the world for intensive seminars in the beautiful Schloß Wahn.

Brian Edwards's book *After the American Century: The Ends of U.S. Culture in the Middle East* came out in paperback in May. The book has been reviewed widely by journals in history, political science, Middle East studies, and literature, and in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Iran. Arabic and Italian translations are underway. He was interviewed about the book by WorldPolicy.org, the New Books in Islamic Studies, and Jdalyya. During 2016-17, he gave a number of invited lectures, including the James Chace Lecture at Bard's International and Global Affairs Program, at the Pittsburgh Humanities Center, Indiana University's School of International and Global Studies, Dartmouth, and a plenary at the Trump's America conference at University College Dublin.

Just before the new academic year began, on September 11, 2017, he gave a lecture entitled "Trump, Twitter, Circulation: American Politics as Global Entertainment" in Abu Dhabi to a large audience at the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute. Edwards also published a book chapter entitled "Arab Spring, American Autumn" in *American Studies Encounters the Middle East*, ed. Alex Lubin and Marwan Kraidy, and an essay entitled "Moving Target: Is 'Homeland' Still Racist?" for the *LA Review of Books*. He wrote and narrated a 30-minute podcast called "Baptism of Solitude: Paul Bowles's Morocco Tapes," which was the season premiere of *The Organist* and adapted his *Homeland* piece as an audio essay for KPCC, SoCal Public Radio.

Betsy Erkkilä was invited to give a talk at the The Graduate Center CUNY on her book in progress *The Abigail Adams Affairs* in September 2017. "Phillis Wheatley and the Revolutionary Transatlantic," which is drawn from her book in progress *Imagining the Revolution*, is forthcoming in the Provocations section of *Early American Literature* in 2018. Her essay entitled "Radical Imaginaries: Crossing Over with Whitman and Dickinson," which she presented at the Emily Dickinson International Society Conference in Paris in 2016, is forthcoming in *Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson: A Colloquy*, ed. Cristanne Miller and Eric Athénot. Another essay, "The Art of Revolution: Whitman and the Poetics of Democracy," will be published in the *Oxford Handbook of Rhetoric and Political Theory*, ed. Dilip Gaonkar and Keith Topper (Oxford UP). Her essay "Elizabeth Bishop, Modernism, and the Left" was published in the Theory in Practice section of "Marxism, Critical Theory, History" in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Wiley Blackwell, 2017). She is currently writing the introduction to a forthcoming collection of her essays on Whitman entitled *The Whitman Revolution: Why Poetry Matters* (Iowa UP).

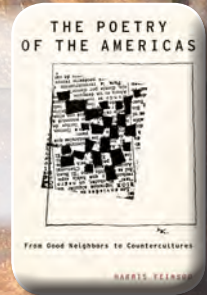
She presented a paper entitled "Insurrection, the Paris Commune, and Late Whitman" at the Transatlantic Walt Whitman Association Symposium in Paris in June 2017. She also chaired a panel entitled "Circuits of Knowledge Production: Manuals, Tours, Public History" at the American Studies Association meeting in Chicago in November 2017. Professor Erkkilä has been invited to serve as a faculty member in residence at the spring 2018 École Normale Supérieure de Lyon. In May 2018, she has also been invited to be one of the four international scholars to teach the Whitman seminar at TU Dortmund University in Germany, which will celebrate the tenth anniversary Transatlantic Walt Whitman Seminar and Symposium.

The Shakespeare Association of America awarded **Becky Fall** with the 2017 J. Leeds Barroll Dissertation Prize for her project titled *Common Nonsense: The Social Uses of Not Making Sense in Late Renaissance England*.

Harris Feinsod published his book, *The Poetry of the Americas: From Good Neighbors to Countercultures* (Oxford, 2017). He also presented work in connection with it at the annual meetings of the Modern Language Association and the American Comparative Literature Association. He presented several further essays from a new project on the global imaginaries of maritime modernism at the English Department's Doctoral Recruitment

FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

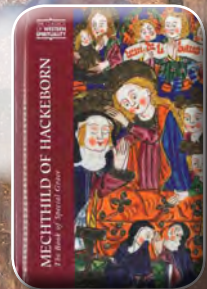
Harris Feinsod
The Poetry of the Americas: From Good Neighbors to Countercultures
(Oxford 2017)



Reginald Gibbons
An Orchard in the Street
(American Readers Series 2017)



Barbara Newman
Mecbthild of Hackeborn: 'The Book of Special Grace'
(trans, Paulist Press 2017)



William N. West
As If: Essays in 'As You Like It'
(punctum books 2016)



FACULTY NEWS CONTINUED

Colloquium, and at a conference on world literature and global history cosponsored by the University of Victoria and Northwestern's Center for Global Culture and Communication. A related essay on the photographer Allan Sekula appeared in the popular magazine *n+1*. In November, he was an invited speaker at the University of Chicago's annual Graduate Conference in English.

Christine Froula presented *Technologies of the Word, or The Dog Ate My Novel: Speech, Manuscript, Voice, and Book in a Charleston Play* at the International Virginia Woolf Conference at the University of Reading, UK, and a plenary lecture, "Imaginary Gardens with Real Writers in Them: Elizabeth von Arnim, E. M. Forster, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf" at the joint conference on Mansfield and von Arnim at the Huntington Library, both in July. Two articles, *Unwriting The Waves* and "The Zeppelin in the Sky of the Mind," and a guest-edited annual, *Katherine Mansfield Studies* 10, are forthcoming. Work on Bloomsbury dramatic works continues.

Alanna Hickey's dissertation, *The Forms of National Belonging: The Politics of Nineteenth-Century Native American Poetry*, won the English department's 2016-17 Jean H. Hagstrum Prize for Best Dissertation.

Jim Hodge's article, "Earth-Specific Art: Phenomenology and the Digital Cinema of Peter Bo Rappmund," was published in the most recent volume of *ASAP/Journal*.

Jules Law spent the greater part of the past year designing curricular initiatives that extend beyond the classroom. In a seminar this past winter, he helped students create virtual editions of books in the library's special collections. During Spring Break, he led a group of 25 undergraduates on the "Humanities Plunge," a whirlwind week-long cultural tour of Chicago, including visits to the MCA and Lookingglass Theater, a private "el" tour of Chicago neighborhoods, explorations of alternative public arts at the Stony Island Arts Bank and Rebuild Foundation, and meetings with visiting artists and film-makers. During the summer, Law was invited to design and teach Northwestern's inaugural "Humanities and Social Sciences" Bridge program, offering intensive pre-matriculation courses to first-generation students and students from underserved high schools.

Susan Manning recently made her Chicago theatrical debut in *Fremde Tänze*, a work by South African artist Nelisiwe Xaba that turns the performer's gaze on Western images of the exotic Other. Susan took the role of a professor delivering a "historical introduction"--so the role wasn't that

much different from her usual fare. Now she is preparing a dossier on the work by commentators at Black Art International: Temporalities and Territories, the conference that sponsored the performance along with Mellon Dance Studies and the Goethe-Institute.

Other recent appearances include lectures at Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź and Kamnagel in Hamburg on «Nation and World in Modern Dance: Toward a Global History» (An essay on the topic will appear in the forthcoming *Bloomsbury Companion to Dance*.) She continues work on the coedited anthology, *The Futures of Dance Studies*, featuring an array of essays by upcoming scholars, and on *Critical Histories of Modern Dance: A Retrospective*, featuring her own writing over 30+ years, what one colleague in creative writing called "New and Collected Tales."

Jeffrey Masten was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for 2017, for work on a new critical edition of Christopher Marlowe's historical tragedy *Edward II*. At a ceremony in June, Denison University awarded Masten an Alumni Citation, the college's highest honor for alumni. His essay on editing and glossing race, gender, and sexuality appears in the recently published *Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment: Gender, Sexuality, Race*. Masten's 2016 book *Queer Philologies* has been reviewed in *TLS*, *SEL*, *Shakespeare Studies*, *Comparative Drama*, and other publications, and *Choice* rated it "Essential."

Barbara Newman continues her engagement with the medieval holy women of Helfta. By serendipity, her translation of Mechthild of Hackeborn's *Book of Special Grace* (the first English version in 600 years) came out in the same week that she visited that refounded convent in Germany. Its Danish prioress, Sister Christiane, is fluent in German, English, and Latin. Barbara enjoyed the opportunity to give three lectures this year at the invitation of former students, now tenured (or soon to be so) at Lake Forest College, Simpson College, and the University of Rochester. Her work on Guglielma of Milan has inspired a new historical novel (*The Bones You Have Cast Down* by Jean Huets), and her article on the *Rothschild Canticles* occasioned a British preacher's sermon for Trinity Sunday. In September, with great trepidation, she delivered her first lecture *auf deutsch* to accompany a performance of *Frauenlob's Kreuzleich* in a modern setting for chorus and orchestra.

Regina Schwartz presented an installment of her January 2017 book, *Loving Justice, Living Shakespeare*, at a summer lecture at the University of Cambridge, at the 2017 Renaissance Society

of America in Chicago, another at the University of Chicago for Lumen Christi, and most recently at conference at the Newberry library where she gave the keynote on ethical conversion and *King Lear*. In January, she contributed an essay on loving the stranger to the LA Review of Books' blog.

Laurie Shannon spoke - in hopefully-inspirational mode - about the topic of second monographs on a panel considering "Academics as Writers" (at the Renaissance Society of America conference in Chicago), with colleagues Roland Greene (Stanford), Anthony Grafton (Princeton), and Alan Thomas (University of Chicago Press). She gave a paper, "Nature's Changing Course: Asking Questions with Sonnet 18," in the Plenary Session at the Shakespeare Association of America meeting in Atlanta. She also presented aspects of her current project on the natural history of human being as a keynote for a conference on scale in the Comparative Literature program at the University of Maryland and in a lecture in the English Department at Princeton. She continues to chair what she thinks may be the best English faculty in the United States.

Studies in Philology has accepted **Seth Swanner's** (6th year) article, "The Beauty of Ho(me)liness: The Unhandsome Sacramentality of Almost-Shape Poems in George Herbert's *The Temple*." It is currently scheduled to come out next summer.

Whitney Taylor's article, "Breathing Space: The Inspired Ecosystem of Paradise Lost," is forthcoming in the journal *Renaissance Studies*

Rachel Webster continues to direct our Creative Writing Program, and has enjoyed helping to plan and steer the new MFA+MA in Creative Writing. Rachel was named a 2017 Hewlett Fellow for her work to bring diversity awareness into the Creative Writing core curriculum through the course, ENG 392, The Situation of Writing, and she was just made a 2017-18 Fellow in the Op Ed Project, also known as the Public Voices Thought Leadership Program. This year, Rachel's essays were published in several journals including *Parabola*, *The Baltimore Review*, *Tin House* and *Poetry* (online), and her poems were featured in journals and anthologies, including the forthcoming *Bettering American Poetry Anthology of 2017* associated with the VIDA Count.

Having spent the first part of 2016 celebrating the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, punctuated at the very end of the year by the appearance of his *As If: Essays in Shakespeare's*

FACULTY NEWS CONTINUED

As You Like It (punctum), **Will West** spent the second part celebrating the 500th anniversary of the publication of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, giving talks on the poem and its influences on, among others, Shakespeare, at the University of Chicago, the University of Illinois, and the University of Cologne. He also traveled to the École Normale Supérieure of Lyon to lecture on *As You Like It* to students studying for the agrégation, and to Shakespeare's Globe in London to co-lead (with Linda Gregerson and Will Tosh) a workshop on performing Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and other

works. His "In the Detail," a visual and textual exploration of Aby Warburg and the idea of the Renaissance as neighbor and interloper, appeared in the digital journal *thresholds*.

Kelly Wisecup's article on Native American histories of colonization embedded in vocabulary books is forthcoming in *American Literary History*, and her co-edited forum on the relationships between early American studies and Native American and Indigenous Studies is forthcoming next year in the *William and Mary Quarterly* and *Early American*

Literature. In 2016-2017, she gave invited talks at the University of Mississippi, San Jose State University, Purdue University, and the Newberry Library. She participated in a successful proposal to the Mellon Foundation to fund the newly launched Center for Native American and Indigenous Research at Northwestern. After receiving tenure in 2017 (the happiest of that year's accomplishments), she is on research leave in 2017-2018 to complete her book, "Assembled Relations: Compilation, Collection, and Native American Writing"

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Anne Boemler (5th year) and **Nora Eltahawy** (Ph.D. 2017) were selected as co-recipients of the English Department's 2016-17 Teaching Excellence Award.

Last fall, **Kellen Bolt** (6th year) was invited to teach a course called "The Politics of American Immigrant Literature" at the University of Bamberg in Bamberg, Germany. While there, he also gave an invited lecture titled "The Art of Plantation Management: Race, Risk, and Swamp Ecologies in Charles Sealsfield's Immigrant Writing." His article, "Drain, Baby! Drain?: Swamps and Citizenship in Crèvecoeur's Immigrant Sketches," has been accepted for 2018 publication in *Early American Literature*.

Over the past year, **Casey Caldwell** (5th year) organized and moderated a discussion - later added to the Alice Kaplan Center for the Humanities Debt Dialogue series - about student debt between President Schapiro and Bruce Carruthers, Director of the Buffett Institute. He attended Cornell University's 2017 Summer Critical Theory Program under the auspices of a fellowship awarded by the Northwestern Critical Theory group. Caldwell also spent time researching early modern accounting manuals at the British Library, Oxford's Bodleian, as well visiting the Henslowe-Alleyn archives at Dulwich College.

In April, **Sara Černe**, **Maria Dikcis**, **Delali Kumavie** (all 4th years), and **Kate Scharfenberg** (2nd year) participated as Graduate Scholars in the inaugural seminar in the Newberry Library's ongoing "Chicago Studies and the Archive" series. The interdisciplinary seminar was designed to give students an introduction to current theories of the archive and to modern archival practices.

Clay Cogswell (4th year) was awarded the English

department's 2016-17 Award for Excellence as a Teaching Assistant.

Jayne Collins and **Sarah Mason** (both in their 3rd year) attended the Summer Institute Cologne [sic], *Belief/Believe* being this year's topic. Jayne participated in a seminar on Sound Media, and Sarah in the seminar on Theatre Historiography.

In February, Vintage/Penguin Random House NZ published **Bonnie Etherington's** (4th year) first novel, *The Earth Cries Out*, which tells the story of a young girl living in the Indonesian province of West Papua during the late 1990s. It is on the list of books being considered for 2018 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards in the categories of best first book and best fiction.



Meaghan Fritz (6th year) received 2017 fellowships from the Nantucket Historical Association, the Melville Society, as well as a Graduate Research Grant from Northwestern's Graduate School. With that support, she travelled to the New Bedford Whaling Museum & Research Library and the Nantucket Historical Association, where she looked at the diaries and correspondences of whaling wives and widows, and to the Sandwich, MA Glass Museum and Research Library to study the diaries of Hannah Rebecca Burgess. Fritz will be in residence at the Newberry Library in the spring of 2018 as the recipient of the 2017-18 Lawrence Lipking Fellowship.

Ean High (6th year) is a 2017-18 Charlotte W. Newcombe Fellow, having received the Newcombe

Dissertation Completion Fellowship, one of the nation's largest and most competitive awards for Ph.D. candidates in the humanities and social sciences whose work addresses questions of ethical and religious values.

Andrew Keener (6th year) spent last summer at Harvard University, the Bodleian Library, the British Library, and the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, conducting research on bilingual and multilingual dictionaries published in early modern England. His article "A 1562 Petrarchan Italian-English dictionary inscribed by 'Maria sidney,'" which documents his discovery of a bilingual lexicon possessed and annotated by the translator, poet, and playwright Mary Sidney Herbert, is forthcoming in *Sidney Journal*. Last September, at the Book History & Digital Humanities Conference in Madison, WI, he presented a paper jointly with Weinberg '17 alumna Katie Poland entitled *Renaissance Books, Midwestern Libraries: Leveraging Digital Resources for Local Special Collections*. This paper digested the digital humanities/rare book cataloging project Keener organized and supervised over the course of three years at Northwestern, and which will be funded in the 2017-18 academic year to include pre-1700 religious books in the Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary's Styberg Library. Most recently, Andrew was named in the Bibliographical Society of America's New Scholars competition as this year's Pantzer New Scholar.

Susanna Sacks (5th year) is one of the 2017-18 Kaplan Humanities Institute's Franke Fellows, joining graduate and undergraduate fellows as the program enters its second year.

GRADUATE PAPERS & CONFERENCES

English Graduate Student Organization 2016-17 Colloquium Series

FALL 2016

Sarah Mason (3rd year) “Infected Minds: Evangelicalism, Syphilis, and the Dread of a Communicable Madness”

Will Pierce (6th year) “Secrecy, Privacy, and Surveillance in John Donne’s *Devotions*”

WINTER 2017

Anne Boemler (5th year) “‘Baudy Balades’ or ‘Misticall Song’: The Erotics of Devotion in the *Song of Songs*”

Maria Dikcis (4th year) “Don’t Hate the (Word) Player: Queer Sexual Politics and the Erotics of Wordplay in Harryette Mullen’s *Sleeping with the Dictionary*”

SPRING 2017

Uta Ayala (6th year) “How to be plastic: Reading *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*”

Bonnie Etherington (4th year) “Mapping Modernity in Guam: The *Unincorporated* Ecologies of Craig Santos Perez’s Poetics”

OCTOBER 2016

Colloque international: Traduire à la Renaissance/Tradurre nel Rinascimento/Translating during the Renaissance.

École Normale Supérieure de Lyon – Lyon, France

Andrew Keener (6th year) “Polyglot Dictionaries, Drama, and Translation in Renaissance England”

British Association for Romantic Studies conference: “Placing Charlotte Smith”

Chawton House - Chawton, UK

The British Association for Romantic Studies (BARS) is the UK’s leading national organization for promoting the study of Romanticism. BARS acts as a hub for scholarship by supporting conferences, disseminating news and events, providing bursaries and prizes to early career researchers, publishing a Bulletin, and establishing links with sister organizations.

Sam Botz (4th year) “The Nothingness of All for Which You Carr’: The Aesthetics of the Audible in *Beachy Head*”

NOVEMBER

“Untold Futures: Speculation, Redemption, Disappointment” - English Graduate Conference

University of Chicago - Chicago, IL

Maria Dikcis “Thinking Beyond Surfaces: Brian Kim Stefans’ *Kluge*. A Meditation, Gertrude Stein’s *Continuous Present*, and the Corruptibility of Time”

JANUARY 2017

Modern Language Association Philadelphia, PA

Ean High (6th year) chaired the Early American Group panel: “The Politics of Invocation,” and presented a paper titled, “Joseph Breintnall’s Walk Down Market Street,” for the “Philadelphia Stories” panel.

Todd Nordgren (6th year) “Queer Happy Endings, or, is There Life after Death?”

FEBRUARY

Southern Studies Conference Auburn University - Montgomery, AL

The annual Southern Studies Conference is an interdisciplinary international conference, with scholars typically drawn from more than a dozen states and several countries. It centers its theme around all aspects of the American South, spanning the fields of anthropology, geography, art history, American history, American literature and theater, music history, communication studies, mass communication, and sociology.

Sara Černe (4th year) “Watching God, Watching Men: Environmental Justice and the Legacy of Zora Neale Hurston in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*”

34th Annual Meeting of the Illinois Medieval Association Evanston, IL

Since 1983, IMA has promoted medieval studies in Illinois and the Midwest, hosting an annual meeting and publishing proceedings from those meetings in “Essays in Medieval Studies.”

Stephanie Pentz (6th year) “Imperialist Sovereignty and Environmental Resistance in the Alliterative *Romance of Alexander and Dindimus*”

“RE... Africa,” the African Studies Graduate Student Seminar Northwestern University – Evanston, IL

Susanna Sacks (5th year) “Page & Stage in the Digital Age: Tracing the Circulation of Poetry in Southeastern Africa”

MARCH

Newberry Consortium in American Indian Studies Graduate Workshop Amherst College – Amherst, MA

The Newberry Consortium in American Indian Studies consortium draws on the Newberry’s world-renowned collections in American Indian and Indigenous studies and the resources of the McNickle Center to offer programs such as institutes, conferences, and annual workshops, as well as provide fellowships to graduate

GRADUATE PAPERS & CONFERENCES CONTINUED

students and faculty at member institutions.

Bonnie Etherington “Indigenous Languages and Literatures in the Colonial Archive” workshop participant

47th Annual Renaissance Society of America Conference
Chicago, IL

Founded in 1954, the Renaissance Society of America promotes the study of the period 1300-1650. The RSA brings together scholars from many backgrounds in a wide variety of disciplines from North America and around the world.

Andrew Keener “‘Doo Comedies like you wel’: A Digital Approach to Language-Learning Dialogues and Renaissance Drama”

Anne Boemler “‘Baudy Balades’ or ‘Misticall Song’: The Erotics of Devotion in the *Song of Songs*”

Casey Caldwell (5th year) “Deciphering the Dramatic Life of the Early Modern Jetton,” for a Art History panel

APRIL

45th Annual Shakespeare Association of America Conference
Atlanta, GA

The Shakespeare Association of America is a non-profit professional organization for the advanced academic study of William Shakespeare’s plays and poems, his cultural and theatrical contexts, and the many roles he has played in world culture.

Casey Caldwell “‘Ciphers to this great accompt’: The Theater of Accounting in *Henry V*”

Annual Conference of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies
Minneapolis, MN

Established in 1969, the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies is an interdisciplinary group dedicated to the advancement of scholarship in all aspects of the period . . . from the later 17th through the early 19th century

Sam Botz “The Proper Reader and the Woman Writer: Reorienting Sympathy in Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Men*”

Hannah Chaskin (5th year) “‘This Small Ambassador’: Sex and the Roving Woman in the Works of Aphra Behn”

Nina Moon (3rd year) “Sweetly Forced: Rehearsing Consent in Eliza Haywood’s *Fantomina*”

MAY

52nd International Congress on Medieval Studies
Kalamazoo, MI

The International Medieval Congress is an annual gathering of more than 3,000 scholars interested in Medieval Studies. It features more than 550 sessions of

papers, panel discussions, roundtables, workshops, and performances.

Stephanie Pentz “East Teaches West: Orientalism and Its Alternatives in the *Polychronicon*”

JUNE

Tenth Transatlantic Walt Whitman Week Symposium
Université Paris-Est-Créteil in Val-de-Marne, France

Brad Dubos “Reconstructing Marx in *Democratic Vistas*: Walt Whitman against Ruling Ideology”

Native American and Indigenous Studies Association
Vancouver, BC

Bonnie Etherington “‘Living Bridges’: Craig Santos Perez’s Poetics as an Experiment in Mobile, Flexible Community”

African Literature Association annual conference
Yale University - New Haven, CT

Susanna Sacks “Digital Voices: Negotiating Global Forms & Local Identity in Cape Town Performance Poetry”

27th annual Conference on Virginia Woolf
University of Reading - Reading, UK

Marking the centenary of the founding of the Hogarth Press, the conference aimed to celebrate Leonard and Virginia Woolf’s Hogarth Press as a key intervention in modernist and women’s writing and to mark its importance to independent publishing and bookselling.

Todd Nordgren “Hogarth’s Queer Connections: Comparing William Plomer and Virginia Woolf’s Imperial Romances”

AUGUST

2017 meeting of the Modernist Studies Association
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Harrington Weihl (3rd year) panel organizer “‘Making it Anew’: Remediating Modernism in Video Games”; paper presented “El Lissitzky Reimagined: Playing with Avant-garde Aesthetics”

SEPTEMBER

50th anniversary British Association for Applied Linguistics conference
University of Leeds

Susanna Sacks “WhatsApp Poetics: The Structure Style of Chichewa Poetry Groups on Whatsapp”

GRADUATE COLLOQUIA

American Cultures Colloquium

The American Cultures Colloquium hosts lectures and workshops that draw together an interdisciplinary group of graduate students and faculty. Last year, the ACC's program included talks by Joshua Miller (University of Michigan), Annie McClanahan (University of California, Irvine), J. Gerald Kennedy (Louisiana State University), Monique Allewaert (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Karen Sánchez-Eppler (Amherst College), and Phil Harper (NYU).

The ACC's 2017-2018 speaker series will begin with a joint talk by Brian Russell Roberts (Brigham Young University) and Michelle Ann Stephens (Rutgers University) in the Fall Quarter. The colloquium will then welcome Zakiyyah I. Jackson (University of Southern California) in the Winter, and Christine Gerhardt (University of Bamberg, Germany) in the Spring.

The ACC will also host several events with Northwestern's own scholars. In addition to a movie night and a discussion of an English faculty member's recently published work, we are also hosting a dialogue between Ana Aparicio (Anthropology) and John Alba Cutler (English).

Early Modern Colloquium

The Early Modern Colloquium at Northwestern University is an interdisciplinary group of faculty and graduate students who meet regularly for lectures and workshops on research-in-progress. Last year, the EMC organized a series of lectures by Jean Howard (Columbia), Laurie Shannon (Northwestern), Adrian Randolph (Northwestern), and Marjorie Rubright (University of Toronto).

The 2017-2018 academic year will continue the EMC's conversations about work-in-progress and presentations from visiting scholars, as well as a workshop on digital humanities research tools conducted by Eric Alexander (Carleton College). The group will welcome speakers including Beth Quitslund (Ohio University), Jeff Masten (Northwestern University), Lia Markey (Newberry Center for Renaissance Studies), and Michael Cole (Columbia University).

Long Nineteenth Century Colloquium

The Long Nineteenth Century Colloquium, co-chaired this year by Sarah Mason (English) and Katya Maslakowski (History), supports Northwestern scholars of the global 19th-century by bridging disciplinary boundaries, research interests, and career stages, encouraging global and transnational scholarship, and engaging with significant trends in the field. A big thank-you to last-year's chairs, Clay Cogswell and Ruby Daily, who put together a wonderful schedule of talks: Judith Walkowitz (Johns Hopkins University) on "Prostitution and the Politics of History: History and the Politics of Prostitution," Helena Michie (Rice University) on "Extra Man: Dining (Out) Beyond the Marriage Plot," and Paul Deslandes (University of Vermont) on "The Pleasures and Perils of the Male Body in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain."

The LNCC Speaker Series has six talks scheduled for the 2017-18 year. Priya Satia (Stanford University), Ivan Kreilkamp (Indiana University), and Tim Barringer (Yale University) will be speaking in the coming quarters, as will Northwestern Professors Andrew Leong and Raevin Jimenez and advanced doctoral candidate Jacob Leveton. Our visiting scholars will continue the tradition of offering graduate student master-classes on cross-disciplinary topics—namely, global projects, scholarly publishing, and working with visual materials. LNCC will also be holding three graduate student writing workshops, which provide dissertating students with invaluable feedback from their colleagues.

GRADUATE COLLOQUIA CONTINUED

Indigeneity & Native American Studies Colloquium

The Colloquium on Indigeneity and Native American Studies (CINAS) is a Graduate student run interdisciplinary academic endeavour that aims to promote and stimulate conversations on Indigenous peoples and politics at Northwestern. In 2016-17, Bethany Hughes (Performance Studies) was the Colloquium's President, Bonnie Etherington (English) was Treasurer, and Kelly Wisecup was our faculty advisor. This Spring we collaborated with a number of organizations on campus (the Native American and Indigenous Peoples Steering Group, Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, the Buffett Institute, the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, and the Center for the Writing Arts) to host the poet Robert Sullivan for the inaugural CINAS short-term artist-in-residence program. Throughout the year we have held quarterly working group meetings and enjoyed workshops and lectures with a wide range of speakers, including John Low, Dion Million, Amy Lonetree, and Toni Jensen. We look forward to continuing on with more Indigenous studies-related initiatives and programming next year.

ALUMNI NEWS

Carla Arnell (Ph.D. 1999) recently had a new article accepted for publication: "Work for the Spirit: Medievalism, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and the Development of a Practical Spirituality in Evelyn Underhill's Novel *The Gray World*." Arnell's article will appear in *Studies in Medievalism* 28 (Summer 2019).

Laura Braunstein (Ph.D. 2000) and **John Edward Martin** (Ph.D. 2006) recently collaborated on a one-day seminar on "Emotional Labor in the Digital Humanities" that was presented at the 2017 Digital Frontiers Conference. The project was funded by a mentor grant from the University of North Texas Office for Faculty Success, and was designed to bring together faculty from different areas or institutions on projects that benefit the scholarly community.

Laura is currently the Digital Humanities Librarian at Dartmouth College. She is a co-editor of *Digital Humanities in the Library: Challenges and Opportunities for Subject Specialists* (ACRL 2015), and her most recent publication is *Open Stacks: Making DH Labor Visible* (DH+Lib, 2017). John is a Scholarly Communication Librarian at the University of North Texas, where he works with faculty and students on publication projects, digital scholarship, open access, and other issues related to scholarly communication. He recently presented a paper on "Teaching Poe through the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy*" at the 2017 American Literature Association Conference. He'll also be presenting a paper on comics & the epistolary tradition at the 2018 Popular Culture Association Conference. He has a chapter on scholarly communication forthcoming in *The Academic Librarian's Toolkit* (ACRL, 2018). Both librarians remain active in library and literary societies, so don't be surprised to see them lurking around one of your conferences in the near future!

Michael Bryson (Ph.D. 2001) was promoted to Full Professor at Cal State three years ago, and recently published his third book, *Love and its Critics: From the Song of Songs to Shakespeare and Milton's Eden* (Cambridge: Open Book, 2017), written in collaboration with one of his former students.

Anna Fenton-Hathaway (Ph.D. 2012) was selected to be a regular writer for *Medical and Health Humanities*, an online journal founded in 2017 by literary scholar Arden Hegele and physician Rishi Goyal, with the support of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University. In April, she presented a paper, *Dystopia Medicine*, at the Montgomery Lecture Series organized by the Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Ryan Friedman (Ph.D. 2004) is currently directing the Film Studies Program at Ohio State, which has just launched an M.A. program, as well as a new undergraduate major which focuses on developing students' creative voices as they produce moving-image works across four areas: animation, experimental, documentary, and narrative.

Chris Hager (Ph.D. 2003) is the Charles A. Dana Research Associate Professor of English at Trinity College, and his second book, *I Remain Yours: Common Lives in Civil War Letters*, is soon to be published by Harvard University Press.

Bryan Hampton (Ph.D. 2004) was promoted to Full Professor at the University of Tennessee - Chattanooga in 2016, and serves as the James D. Kennedy Distinguished Teaching Professor and Associate Department Head. He has written a screenplay, *Tears of the Iconoclast*, which dramatizes Milton's short time in prison following the Restoration, and his article "A 'true Transubstantiation': Dr.

ALUMNI NEWS CONTINUED

Donne, Holy Violence, and the Preaching Crisis in the Year of Monarchical Transition” will appear in volume 25 of *The John Donne Journal* (forthcoming 2018). He is currently on sabbatical this semester and is working on a new book project that considers the 1823 rediscoveries of Shakespeare’s first quarto of *Hamlet* and Milton’s *De Doctrina Christiana*.

Carissa Harris’s (Ph.D. 2012) book, “Obscene Pedagogies: Transgressive Talk and Sexual Education in Late Medieval Britain,” will be published by Cornell University Press in late 2018. She published a piece on the Bill Cosby case and medieval drug-facilitated sexual assault with Vox in June, and contributed an essay entitled “Rape and Justice in the Wife of Bath’s Tale” to the *Open Access Companion to the Canterbury Tales*.

Jackie Hendricks’s (Ph.D. 2013) article, “Gavin Douglas’s *Aeneidos*: Caxton’s English and ‘Our Scottis Languag’” is forthcoming in the Fall issue of *Studies in Scottish Literature*.

Jim Lang (Ph.D. 1997) received a Fulbright Specialist grant last year, and in September of 2016 spent three weeks in Colombia (Barranquilla and Bogota) working with three universities on the development of an online course in teaching and learning for Latin American faculty. Fellow graduate alum **Gwynn Dujardin** (Ph.D. 2006) and a third collaborator have co-edited a collection of essays on

new approaches to teaching the literature survey courses which will be (if it hasn’t already been) published by West Virginia University Press in December of 2017. The collection includes an essay by another English Department alum, **Tim Rosendale** (Ph.D. 1998). Finally, in April of 2018, Lang will have a month-long guest faculty appointment at Central European University in Budapest.

Gregory Laski (Ph.D. 2012) first book, *Untimely Democracy: The Politics of Progress after Slavery*, was published by Oxford University Press in October of this year. He is co-editor of a recent *J19* forum on “‘Democracy’ in the American Nineteenth Century” and has chapters forthcoming in the MLA’s *Approaches to Teaching Charles W. Chesnut* and Cambridge’s *African American Literature in Transition* series. He is now at work on a new book project: a cultural history of race and revenge after the Civil War.

Eric LeMay (Ph.D. 2002) earned tenure, and is now an Associate Professor at Ohio University. Earlier this year his new book, a multimedia collection titled *Essays on the Essay and Other Essays* was published by Zone 3 Press.

Janaka Bowman Lewis (Ph.D. 2009) earned tenure this past Spring, and was promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of English at UNC - Charlotte. In the summer, she became the Director of the Program in Women’s and Gender Studies. Her

ALUMNI PUBLICATIONS

Michael Bryson
Love and its Critics:
From the Song of Songs to
Shakespeare and Milton’s Eden
(Cambridge, 2017)



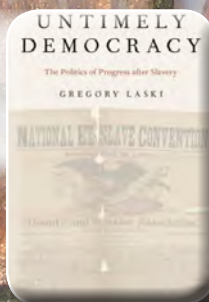
Chris Hager
I Remain Yours: Common
Lives in Civil War Letters
(Harvard, 2017)



Katie Hartsock
Bed of Impatiens
(Able Muse, 2016)



Greg Laski
Untimely Democracy: The Politics of
Progress after Slavery
(Oxford, 2017)



Eric LeMay
Essays on the Essay
and Other Essays
(Zone 3, 2016)



ALUMNI NEWS CONTINUED

book, *Bold Nia Marie Passes the Test* (Heart-Head Publishing, 2017) was published this past summer, and *Freedom Narratives of African American Women: A Study of 19th Century Writings* (McFarland Press, 2017) has a December release date.

In 2016, **Robert Mayer** (Ph.D. 1987) retired after teaching for a quarter century at Oklahoma State University, where he was Professor of English and, for many years, Director of the Screen Studies Program. His most recent book, *Walter Scott and Fame: Authors and Readers in the Romantic Age*, was published by Oxford in 2017. He lives in New Mexico and is at work on a study of the novelist Philip Roth, the poet Philip Levine, and the filmmaker Barry Levinson.

Jennifer Michael (Ph.D. 1996) is now in her second year as Chair of the English Department at the University of the South (Sewanee). She is also serving as President of the International Conference on Romanticism. In 2015-16 she had a sabbatical grant from the Appalachian College Association to work on her book, "Poetry at the Edge of Silence." She has also been publishing poems in such journals as *Mezzo Cammin*, *3 Elements Review*, and *Cumberland River Review*.

Earlier this year, **Gayle Rogers** (Ph.D. 2008) was promoted to Full Professor at the University of Pittsburgh, and will serve as associate chair of the English Department next year. He and Sean Latham co-edit the book series *New Modernisms* (Bloomsbury Academic) and

are developing some online resources for the introductory study of modernism. He has also started a series of workshops for Pittsburgh-area high school teachers on approaches to world literature. He has recently published in *NOVEL* and is co-editing a cluster of essays for *Modernism/modernity*. His new project examines the history of the concept of speculation, from philology to finance to fiction, from the early modern era to the present.

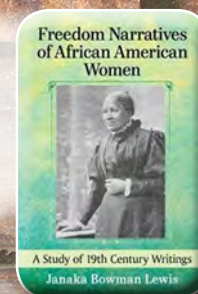
Josh Smith's (Ph.D. 2011) is the Associate Director of the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program at the University of Arkansas, and his first book, *Walter Map and the Matter of Britain*, was published earlier this year by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Liz Trubey (Ph.D. 2001) was promoted to Assistant Dean for Academic Advising here at Northwestern in September 2017. She coordinates and manages the College Advising Office, which serves all students in the Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences from their second quarter until graduation.

Janaka Bowman Lewis
Bold Nia Marie Passes the Test
(Heart-Head Publishing, 2017)



Janaka Bowman Lewis
Freedom Narratives of African American Women: A Study of 19th Century Writings
(McFarland, 2017)



Robert Mayer
Walter Scott and Fame: Authors and Readers in the Romantic Age
(Oxford, 2017)



Joshua Smith
Walter Map and the Matter of Britain
(UPenn, 2017)



John Young
How to Revise a True War Story: Tim O'Brien's Process of Textual Production
(Iowa, 2017)



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We list here, with our most sincere thanks, our valued donors from this past year.

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Musings

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