

Footnotes

2015 - 2016

A Year in Review:

With Dr. Lori Askeland, the new Chair of the English Department!



What a wonderful first year for me, serving as chair in the best department in the Universe! (Ok, I may be biased.) I began my year by writing our departmental assessment of student achievement report, which a) was daunting, and b) probably sounds like it might be terribly boring, but c) actually provided a very satisfactory and humbling birdseye view on this incredible department and all the changes we have made in the last four years, under the visionary leadership of my predecessor as chair, Dr. Cynthia Richards.

First, it may help to realize that around the country, many English departments are struggling to connect with so-called “millennials” (as are many corporations, for that matter—as our visiting alumni reported at a recent colloquium). Thanks to an incredible faculty and revamped curriculum,

we are bucking that trend. Our classes are filled with vibrant and engaging students exploring complex ideas—and, like many of their professors, many of our students have already gone out in the world to present their ideas and writings at professional conferences. Mike Mattison’s student tutors at the Writing Center are out publishing and presenting on the important work they do every day in the Center, and my own English 373 students presented their work at a regional conference on gender, race, and class this past February.

In writing our assessment, I was struck again by the nimbleness and flexibility of the changes we have made to our program: at the heart of what we do are the long traditions of writing in English—with all the time periods, transnational contexts, and multicultural voices that contribute to those traditions—but we also invite students to participate in those traditions as writers themselves, from a variety of angles—as creative writers, as journalists, as editors, as social change advocates, and more.

Given our “writerly” approach to the discipline, it’s fitting that we welcomed to campus several truly extraordinary practitioners in our field as lecturers and visiting scholars—novelist and cultural theorist Gish Jen, New York Times journalist Nicholas Kristof, and Yale critic and memoirist Hazel Carby.

However our most important guest this

year has been the incredible poet, Heather Christle. Not only is she an accomplished author of four chapbooks, but she proved to be an inspiring teacher in her two classes. At our “Matchbook” poetry event, a student said, “wait...you’re telling me there are classes on this?” Yes.

Finally, our 2015-16 year was also marked by having several faculty receive well deserved recognition for their work. First, Rick Incorvati and D’Arcy Fallon both were promoted to full professor—and, icing on the cake, D’Arcy also earned an Ohio Arts Council individual artist award! Second, Cynthia Richards was awarded the Lawrence Ruff Visiting Chair in Eighteenth-Century Studies, University of Dayton during her Spring 2016 sabbatical. And Kate Polak received the Omicron Delta Kappa award for excellence in teaching.

So: Congratulations to all of our remarkable faculty for another wonderful year!

I am very much looking forward to my next year as chair. We have recently learned that poet Eavan Boland will be the Kopenhagen lecturer next November 1, so we are already gearing up for her visit. I get excited every time I look over the list of incredible courses that are planned for 2016-17—and I’m already looking forward to the first day of classes this fall, believe it or not!

Sabbatical Reflections:

With Dr. Cynthia Richards

Dr. Richards served as the Lawrence Ruff Chair of Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of Dayton during her spring sabbatical. As part of that position, she taught a course on Reading the Body in Eighteenth-Century Literature, which she will reprise during fall 2016 at Wittenberg. That course is also serving as a trial run for a book project she is working on tentatively titled “Disabling Reading Practices: The Body, Trauma, and War, 1667-1798.” This book uses Disability Studies and trauma theory to re-frame canonical works of the eighteenth century and to draw attention to the shaping effects of war and trauma on the representation of the body and domestic space during this time period.

In addition to her research on trauma theory and Disability Studies, she continues to develop her pedagogical scholarship. She was recently named pedagogy editor for Aphra Behn Online and an essay on teaching the work of Eliza Haywood in her “Bad Girls: Early Women Writers” class was recently accepted for publication in Approaches to Teaching the Work of Eliza Haywood.

She has greatly enjoyed the time to work on her scholarship during her sabbatical and to teach a graduate class, particularly one in which half of the students are from Saudi Arabia, but is also eager to return to the energizing classrooms of Wittenberg.

Colloquia: & Guest Speakers (F15-S16)



Fall 2015

- Sep. 17** Author **Gish Jin** spoke on how cultural differences affect the construction of self.
- Oct. 11** Drs. **Kate Polak** and **Ian MacDonald** debated whether or not trigger warnings should accompany class materials or if students at the collegiate level are ready to encounter potentially hard subjects without the warning.
- Nov. 9** Human Rights activist **Nicholas Kristof** spoke on his time reporting for social justice issues.
- Nov. 19** The List Colloquium with Professor Fallon, Dr. Buckman, and Dr. MacDonald.
- Dec. 3** What Can You Do With an English Major? Discussion with alumni Katie Johnson, Kelsey Swindler, and John Wing.

Spring 2016

- Jan. 21** Dixon Professor of Poetry **Heather Christle** gave a reading of her work and shared an excerpt from her non-fiction project *On Crying*.
- Feb. 3** Read-A-Thon with a focus commemorating the 400th deathiversary of Shakespeare and Cervantes.
- Feb. 17** Professor **Sha'Dawn Battle** spoke on Yeezy, Black visibility, and the importance of #BlackLivesMatter in American culture.
- Feb. 22-23** Phi Beta Kappa Scholar **Hazel Carby** visited from Yale where she spoke on Afrofuturism and the black futurity.
- Mar. 31** Literary Pub Fest and departmental awards.
- Apr. 14** Matchbook Poetry readings
- Apr. 22** Senior Symposium

Faculty Notes:

Lori Askeland (*Department Chair, Associate Professor of African American Literature and American Women's Literature*)

This was Dr. Askeland's first year serving as chair, and it's been a busy year with a steep learning curve—and lots of support from former chairs Cynthia Richards and Robin Inboden. On top of overseeing the department's amazing colloquia series, Dr. Askeland wrote the department's 4-year assessment report over the summer, diving deep into data and the really wonderful feedback we get from our students about our program. She also sought to keep up her work as a scholar by participating in a round-table discussion of feminism and adoption at the National Women's Studies Association meeting in Milwaukee, WI, in November of 2015, and she presented a paper on renouncing patriarchal violence in memoirs by Ta-Nehisi Coates and Charles Blow at the MELUS Conference in April of 2016 in Charleston, SC.

Sha'Dawn Battle (*Visiting Instructor of African American Literature, Hip-Hop Studies, and Postcolonial Theory*)

Professor Battle presented an essay at Wright State University's "Race, Class, Gender Sexuality" Symposium entitled "Yeezy Taught Us: Spectacles of Black Disembodiment and the 'Recariousness of Empathy'." She presented this same essay as part of Wittenberg's Spring colloquia series, and was heavily involved in the Black Lives Matter panel on campus in March of 2016. She say in on a panel at Central State University's Annual Communications/Black Lives Matter Conference in April, 2016, discussing "Gangster Rap." She has also been working on completing her dissertation which will be finished in May and defended in July of 2016. The department wishes Professor Battle the best of luck!

Bob Davis (*Professor of American Literature*)

Dr. Davis's essay, "The Mute Look That Rolls and Moves": Walt Whitman's Civil War" was published in *Life and Limb: Perspectives on the American Civil War*, ed. Stephen Kenny, Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2015. He gave the plenary talk at an international conference on the American Civil War at the University of Liverpool in April 2015. He gave a conference paper, "Whitman, Levinas, and the Face of the Other," at the Midwest Modern Language annual meeting in Columbus OH in November 2015. And he gave an invited lecture on Whitman and the Civil War to the Kendal Quaker Community of Philadelphia in March 2016.

D'Arcy Fallon (*Professor of Journalism and Non-Fiction*)

Prof. D'Arcy Fallon received an Individual Excellence Award from the Ohio Arts Council in the spring of 2016 recognizing her achievements as a personal essayist. She submitted two essays. The first, "Camp Wonder," is a meditation on waiting, acceptance, and the search for home as seen through the lens of her great-grandparents' courtship in the high altitude former boomtown of Leadville, Colorado. The second essay, "Forever Sports," looks at a married couple trying to find their equilibrium during an ill-fated canoe trip on Ohio's Mad River.

Robin Inboden (*Professor of Victorian Literature*)

Dr. Inboden, in addition to acting as the chair of the Educational Testing Service's (ETS) academic advisory committee for the CLEP Analyzing and Interpreting Literature exam, was named to the College Board's English Language Arts Academic Advisory Committee.

Rick Incorvati (*Professor of Romantic Literature*)

Dr. Incorvati had a small off-stage part in Clark State's production of *Angels in America* in the spring of 2016 (advocating for administrative approval of the production, talking with the actors about the play's importance to the local community, writing program notes, and participating in a Q and A session following one of the performances). Rick continues working with the local LGBT advocacy non-profit Equality Springfield, which is gearing up for the second annual Pride Festival (June 11th, 2016 at Springfield's City Hall Plaza), and he is also coming through the homestretch of a three-year formation process and will be ordained a deacon in the Episcopal Church this June.

Ian MacDonald (*Assistant Professor of African Literature and Post Colonial Theory*)

Dr. MacDonald published articles in *Research in African Literatures* and *The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*. He chaired the Modern Language Association panels on Speculative Fiction at the Austin 2016 MLA convention and was accepted to present a paper at the 2017 MLA convention in Philadelphia.

Mike Mattison (*Associate Professor of Advanced Rhetoric and Grammar*)

Dr. Mattison did manage to organize the top drawer of his desk. In addition, he had the pleasure of watching four Writing Center advisors present at conferences in the fall and spring: Vivian Overholt, Zoey Wilson, and Emily Rayens at the NCPTW in Salt Lake City, UT; and Rae Long at the EWCWA in Alliance, OH. Also, five different advisors had articles published through the online journal *The Dangling Modifier*, including Sophie Hulen, Camila Quinones, and Meaghan Summers. And, we have excellent journals on the way, *Spectrum* and *Witt Review*, under the able direction of Kate DeVantier, Keri Heath, Sarah Webb, and Hannah Hunt. Be looking for copies before the semester ends. Now, he's working on the second desk drawer.

Kate Polak (*Assistant Professor of Apocalyptic, Psychoanalytical Literature, and Poetry*)

Dr. Polak received the Omicron Delta Kappa Excellence in Teaching Award at this year's Honors Convocation, commending her for her excellent work in the classroom with "gruesome but fun" material.

Cynthia Richards (*Professor of Eighteenth Century Literature & Women Writers*)

Dr. Richards served as the Lawrence Ruff Chair of Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of Dayton during her spring sabbatical, teaching a course on Reading the Body in Eighteenth-Century Literature, which she will reprise during fall 2016 at Wittenberg. She is working on a research project tentatively titled "Disabling Reading Practices: The Body, Trauma, and War, 1667-1798." She was recently named pedagogy editor for *Aphra Behn Online* and an essay on teaching the work of Eliza Haywood in her "Bad Girls: Early Women Writers" class was recently accepted for publication in *Approaches to Teaching the Work of Eliza Haywood*. She has greatly enjoyed the time to work on her scholarship during her sabbatical and to teach a graduate class, particularly one in which half of the students are from Saudi Arabia, but is also eager to return to the energizing classrooms of Wittenberg.

The English Department faculty also got new photos this year! Don't they look wonderful?



Student Notes:

AWARDS AND HONORS

Kate DeVantier ('16) was recognized as one of the two graduating seniors to have maintained a 4.0 GPA for all four years at Wittenberg.

Creative Writing minor **Chebrya Jeffrey** ('16) was given the Martin Luther King award which is awarded to the student with highest grade point average of the African American seniors.

TO COMMENCEMENT AND BEYOND

Carl Burgason is working in Yellow Springs, OH as a Community Advocate & Coalition Facilitator at Project Woman.

Salem Chiles is headed to Columbus to continue his studies at OSU after taking the fall semester off. He plans to explore the field of veterinary science.

Amy deBruycker is attending the 'Human Resources Management and Training' graduate program at the University of Leicester in Leicester, England this fall. This summer she worked at a sleep away camp in Pennsylvania for children and teens with attention issues and social concerns.

Kate DeVantier is headed to Dayton to earn her Masters in English and hopes to teach at the collegiate level.

Keri Heath was accepted to University County Cork and University College of Dublin in Ireland for graduate studies in Fiction. She plans to study in Ireland this fall.

Lindsey Heil attended the Denver Publishing Institute in July to learn about a variety of career paths in the publishing industry. She hopes to one day be an editor.

Emily Helderman is headed to the University of Illinois to pursue her Masters in Education.

Hannah Hunt also attended the Denver Publishing Institute in July to learn about a variety of career paths in publishing. She hopes to one day work as a literary agent or book designer while continuing to work on her own writing, exploring young adult, children's literature, and potentially a graphic memoir of her decade showing and training horses.

Chebrya Jeffrey went to the Juniper Institute in June for a poetry retreat. She hopes to work on the Pun Pun Organic Farm for Self-Reliance in Thailand in January 2017 (support her travel at gofundme.com/postgradadventures/). Eventually she hopes to teach writing in Americorps or at a juvenile detention center and get her MFA or go to law school.

Samantha Kurty is planning to explore career paths in journalism and advertising. She hopes to move to Columbus or Cincinnati after graduation, while working to finish her novel and prepare it for publication.

Rachel Tennison plans to read lots of books, take lots of photos, and eat lots of food after graduation.

Sarah Van Deusen is headed to Virginia to pursue acting professionally at the Barter Theatre in Abingdon for the next fifteen months.

**Literary Awards:
& Department Honors****OSTROM EXPOSITORY AWARDS:**

Junior Prize: Amanda Wampler

Senior Prize: Hannah Hunt

CREATIVE WRITING AWARDS:

Poetry: Jayne O'Zemko '18 &
Keri Heath '16

Fiction: Keri Heath '16

Non-Fiction: Jayne O'Zemko '18

Screenwriting: Brooke Brauer '16

Crowl Creativity: Keri Heath '16

EXCELLENCE IN LITERARY STUDIES:

Keri Heath '16

Rachel Tennison '16

KOPPENHAVER AWARDS:

Hannah Hunt '16

Sarah Van Deusen '16

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Credits:

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Thanks to the faculty, staff, students, and alumni for their contributions. © 2016