



Reading Matters

The Department of English

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From (the Edge of) the Chair's Seat

In this season of presidential debates, sudden temperature drops, and other reminders that changes are upon us, it's a comfort to know that the semester's rhythms stay the same. As we enter the eighth week of classes, we're at the midpoint of the term, with all that brings by way of classroom and research work.

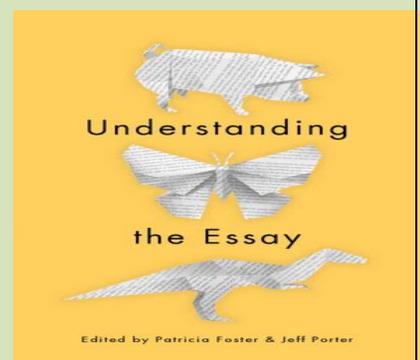
As you read on, you'll see some of the accomplishments of students and faculty, as well as upcoming events, which promise to keep all of us well occupied.

Enjoy.

Publications, Presentations and other Faculty Matters

Patricia Foster and **Jeff Porter's** *Understanding the Essay* has just been published by Broadview Press. An examination of the essay from Montaigne to David Foster Wallace, the book provides critical readings on a range of canonical and contemporary writers, while exploring the genre's checkered history and quirky aesthetics. More information can be found [here](#).

Kevin Kopelson is happy to report that his new book (*Confessions of a Plagiarist: And Other Tales from School*) has not (yet) fallen into some critical abyss and that even (some) people who don't know him in person can appreciate what he attempted there. See, e.g., a rave review the book just got in the [Los Angeles Review](#) as well as its inclusion (alongside work by Maya Angelou and Joan Didion!) on LitBridge's top ten [favorite works](#) of nonfiction. He was not aware, incidentally, that Maya Angelou ever wrote nonfiction.



Emeritus Matters

Susan Lohafer organized and contributed to a special issue of the journal *Narrative* devoted entirely to short fiction theory (20:2, May 2012). Her essay, which focuses on a story by Alice Munro, is entitled "The

Stories of ‘Passion’: An Empirical Study.” She co-organized the program for the 12th International Conference on the Short Story in English, June 2012, in North Little Rock, Arkansas.

City of Literature Matters

The Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature organization will screen the one-hour documentary, “City of Literature,” at a special event on October 14 from 2-4p.m. at the Englert Theatre in Iowa City. The film, made by local filmmakers Ben Hill and John Richard, answers the question, “How did the Midwestern college town of Iowa City become the capital of creative writing in America?” It’s a story of literary ambition, academic innovation, and a promising young poet who became a cultural entrepreneur. A panel discussion about the literary culture of Iowa City will follow the screening, featuring Marvin Bell, former Iowa Poet Laureate and longtime University of Iowa Writer’s Workshop instructor; **Loren Glass**, UI associate professor of English; and Jim Harris, former Prairie Lights Books owner.

In addition, the City of Literature will release its fiscal 2012 annual report and share brief details about a new statewide student essay contest. The event will close with the unveiling of a new iteration of the popular City of Lit. app – created by the University of Iowa UNESCO City of Literature Mobile Application Development Team, a project of the Digital Studio for Public Humanities – which has been improved and now will be available on all devices.

“If anyone wonders why Iowa City was honored with UNESCO’s City of Literature designation, this film answers that question in spirited fashion,” said John Kenyon, City of Literature executive director. “And the chance to share the viewing experience with members of our community, and to see larger-than-life figures like Paul Engle on the Englert’s big screen, makes this event the perfect opportunity to see this inspiring film.”

The first 20 people in the door on Oct. 14 will be given a complimentary copy of the “City of Literature” film DVD. New City of Literature T-shirts and DVD copies of the film will be available for purchase before and after the event. Tickets for the event are \$12 for adults, \$8 for students, and are available at the Englert box office, (319) 688-2653, ext. 1, or [online](#).

Ida Beam Matters

English department faculty and graduate students are invited to attend a lunch with Ida Beam Visiting Professor José E. Limón and UI English Professor **Cheryl Herr**.

Critical Regionalism: A Conversation with José E. Limón and Cheryl Herr

Friday, October 12, 2012 from 12:00pm-1:00 pm

Gerber Lounge, English Department, 304 EPB

A catered lunch from NoDo will be provided with vegetarian (hummus, spinach, and feta wrap), vegan (hummus and spinach wrap), and meat (smoked turkey and cranberry wrap) options. To ensure that we

order enough food, please sign up on the sheet posted in the English faculty mailroom or send an email to claire-fox@uiowa.edu indicating your lunch preference by **Wednesday, October 10**.

José Limón has forwarded several articles for us to read in advance of this event, including his recent debate with Ramón Saldívar that appeared in *American Literary History*, and Cheryl Herr has forwarded a section of her book on critical regionalism. A file containing these pieces is available for photocopying in the English faculty mailroom, or if you would prefer to receive pdf files of the articles, please contact [Claire Fox](#).

Undergraduate Matters

Anne Stapleton writes:

I am delighted to report that the Board of Directors for Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society has approved a student-initiated petition to establish a local chapter at the University of Iowa! Thanks to the efforts of Ryan Holley, president of the University of Iowa English Society, and the support of our DEO Claire Sponsler and CLAS Dean Chaden Djalali, the new chapter of Alpha Tau Iota now stands poised to welcome eligible students. While Sigma Tau Delta offers students many opportunities (including scholarships, calls for publication, and an annual conference), Alpha Tau Iota will provide our undergraduates with local possibilities, all imagined into being by the enthusiastic students who lead the charge this year. Besides Ryan, charter members include Jenna Lester, Steffe Gatton, Katharine Monger, Madhu Koduvalli, Matthew McLaughlin, and Tony O'Donnell. As the chapter's faculty sponsor, I welcome your ideas and hope you join me in commending the diligent efforts of our undergraduates.

Phi Beta Kappa Matters:

Alpha of Iowa chapter is pleased to announce that the following students have been invited to accept membership in Phi Beta Kappa:

Rebecca E. Bacon Ehlers
Jennifer M. Corrigan
Natalie S. Deam
Taryn E. Giese
Emily M. Hagerman
Daniel P. Menzel
Morgan L. Miller
Gabrielle T. Parks
Alyssa R. Perry
Katie H. Priske
Audrey J. Smith
Leonie Sparling

Candidates who accept membership will be invited to participate in the Spring 2013 induction ceremony on Sunday, May 5.

Curriculum Deadline Matters

Spring 2013 course descriptions, subtitles and bookstore information are due to Erin by next Monday, October 8. The lavender 2013-2014 teaching requests sheets are due the following Monday, October 15.

Latino Midwest Matters

All are invited to attend the Obermann-International Programs Humanities Symposium on the Latino Midwest, which will take place Thursday October 11 through Saturday, October 13, 2012. The Latino Midwest is an interdisciplinary symposium examining the history, education, literature, and politics of Latinos in the Midwest against the backdrop of changing demographics, recent immigration raids, labor challenges, and shifting cultural dynamics. For a full schedule of events see the symposium website at <http://bit.ly/uilmw>.

Center for Teaching Matters

The Center for Teaching is offering two workshops designed to help UI instructors more effectively challenge students to do the hard but rewarding work of critical thinking. The workshops will be of interest to any instructor who wants students to actively engage with course materials, understand and welcome the value of uncertainty and “productive disruption,” and reflect on and refine their own learning process. More information, including registration links, can be found [here](#).

Facebook

The English Department is on Facebook! Go to <http://www.facebook.com/IowaEnglish> and “Like” the department.

Other Calendars

[UI Master Calendar](#) | [UI Academic Calendar](#) | [The Writers' Workshop Calendar](#)
[The International Writing Program Calendar](#) | [The Writing University Calendar](#)

Future Issues

The next issue of Reading Matters will be on October 25. Please send submissions for the next issue by 5:00pm on Wednesday, October 24 to [Erin Hackathorn](#).