



Reading Matters

The Department of
English

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From (the Edge of) the Chair's Seat

All has been quiet in EPB of late, as if in anticipation of Thanksgiving break week just around the corner. That isn't to say nothing has been happening, of course. Quite the contrary, and to remind you of a few recent doings, let me mention that under the guidance of its editor Alvin Snider, *PQ*, the department's flagship journal of literary scholarship, hosted a rousingly successful symposium on Authorship two weeks ago; our former colleague, Ashley Dawson, now a Professor at CUNY, gave a talk on the cutting-edge topic of contemporary speculative fiction; and Stacy Klein, Associate Professor at Rutgers, filled the Gerber Lounge for a lecture on Gender and Anglo-Saxon Literature. Those and other talks, readings, meetings, and workshops have made for a lively last few weeks.

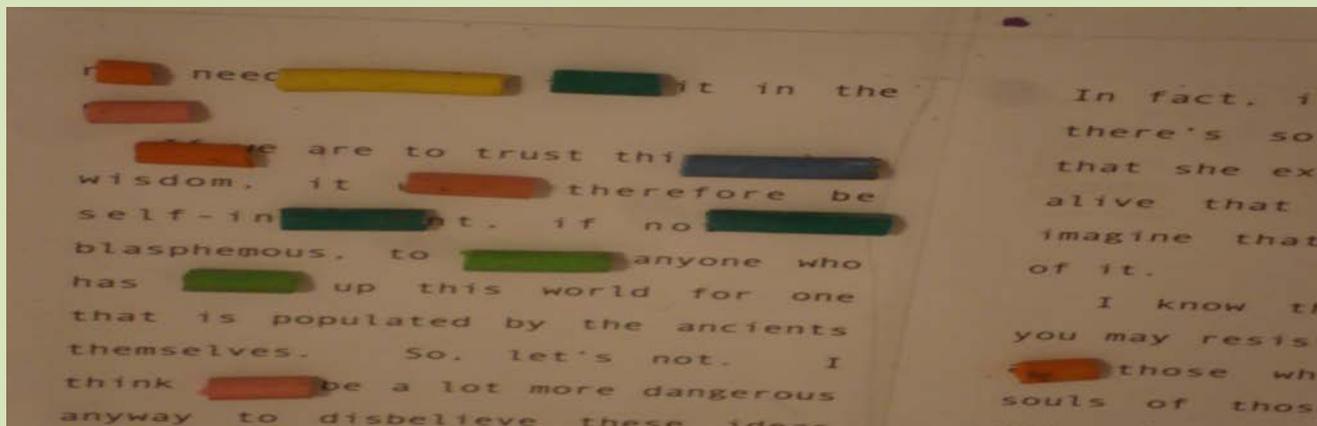
This week, early registration for spring 2013 courses began, and I'm happy to report that there's a range of exciting courses for our majors and graduate students to choose from. In line with our usual practice, we will raise caps on courses gradually as they fill--and filling they already are, quite rapidly. In other teaching news that looks ahead to the future, a draft of the curriculum for 2013-14 is now in faculty hands, and teaching times are being chosen. There will no doubt be some tweaking to be done before the dust settles, but it's good to see the general contours of next year's courses mapped out.

By now you should have received an electronic or paper copy of the department's annual newsletter, on the topic of how and what we read these days: Dog-eared paperback classics? Comic books? E-book popular fiction? Scholarly articles on line and in print journals? Hard-cover bestsellers? The list seems nearly endless and continually changing. I'm not sure exactly how this fits in, but I've even noticed that some students in my lecture class are taking not notes of what I'm saying, but iphotos of what's projected on the big screen. Does that mean when they study they're looking not reading? And is there a difference between the two?

In another manifestation of new media practices, you may also have seen the newly launched online newsletter from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (<http://clas.uiowa.edu/newsletter/fall-2012>), which aims to keep us up to date on what is happening beyond our own little corner of CLAS. More issues will be coming next semester and I urge you to take a look at (and read) the College-wide activities the newsletter is featuring.

While next week brings a well-deserved break from the work of the semester, many faculty and graduate students will be heading off to deliver papers and attend sessions at conferences, including the Bedell NonfictioNow Conference in Melbourne, Australia, and the American Literature Association Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Whether you are traveling far or staying nearby, I wish you a relaxing and productive break and hope you will return recharged for the last weeks of classes that follow on its heels.

Publications, Presentations and other Faculty Matters



John D'Agata and visual artist Katie Merz have collaborated on an exhibit entitled "The Unpleasant One," which recently opened at the Ferro Straus Gallery in New York. The show runs through the middle of December and features several of D'Agata's translations of the ancient Greek writer Plutarch, combined with a series of paintings, drawings, and hieroglyphic sculptures by Merz in response to those translations (see photo above). The show is a result of an Interdisciplinary Research Grant the pair received this summer from the UI's Obermann Center for Advanced Studies, a grant which John strongly recommends all Englishfolk apply for. The pair are now preparing their collaboration for W.W. Norton.

This month at the Chicago Humanities Festival, **Loren Glass** will be representing CLAS and the Obermann Center as he shares his research on Henry Miller and the avant-garde; see the Chicago Tribune list of "[Best Literary Bets.](#)" Information about Loren's forthcoming book, *Counterculture Colophon*, can be found [here](#).

Robin Hemley reports that most of the Nonfiction Writing Program faculty, as well as Chris Merrill, AND twelve NWP grad students will be headed shortly for the fourth NonfictionNOW, this one in Melbourne, Australia. Robin is co-chair of this conference of over 400 writers and teachers of nonfiction from around the world. The conference runs November 21st-24th. Robin also has an essay appearing in the latest edition of [The Pushcart Prize](#) anthology.

Judith Pascoe, author of [The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice](#), has won the American Society for Theatre Research's 2012 [Barnard Hewitt Award](#) for the year's best book in theatre history.

Mindfulness Matters

Please join us at 3:00pm on Thursday, November 29 for a Mindfulness Workshop for graduate students, faculty and staff with Bev Klug, Director of Mindfulness-Based Programs for the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

The workshop will introduce participants to what mindfulness is, what the research has shown about the benefits of a consistent practice of mindfulness, as well as a description of the 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program offered at UIHC. About the practice of mindfulness, Professor Klug offers this description: "Mindfulness is being aware of what is happening as it's happening, in an open, non-judging, compassionate way. This awareness assists us in responding wisely and skillfully to what is occurring; it fosters growth, ease and healing in times of pain and joy. Engaging with our life in this manner helps us become more skillful and creative in our responses, while gaining insight into how to free ourselves from habitual patterns of reacting such as anxiously anticipating the future, chronically focusing on the past or just going through the motions of living, missing what is actually occurring right

now, including when things are pleasant and joyful.” The workshop will take place in Gerber Lounge.

Crossing Borders Seminar Matters

The Crossing Borders Program invites faculty to propose team-taught graduate seminars to be offered between Fall 2013 and Spring 2015. Crossing Borders is an interdisciplinary graduate program sponsored by International Programs and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences that supports doctoral students pursuing international research.

Crossing Borders seminars address international or global themes from multi-disciplinary or interdisciplinary perspectives. They are team-taught by two faculty members with differing geographical, theoretical, and methodological expertise. While we encourage proposals from faculty in different departments, we will give full consideration to proposals from faculty in the same department that incorporate a range of disciplinary perspectives. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences supports faculty participation in CB by recognizing the participation of both instructors in CB seminars as equivalent to one course in their usual teaching assignments.

Proposals should take into consideration the fact that CB fellows come from a wide range of disciplinary traditions in the humanities and social sciences, so seminars may draw students from up to a dozen different departments. Seminars should include a final research assignment that relates to the theoretical, thematic, and/or methodological concerns of the seminar, but offers enough flexibility to accommodate students' individual disciplinary backgrounds. Successful past seminars have addressed broad-ranging themes (e.g. Globalization, Material Cultures, Transnational Trade, Diasporas) or taken broadly interdisciplinary, comparative approaches to more particular social or historical phenomena (e.g. Slavery and Gender, World Cinema).

Complete proposals, along with 1) a short, 2-3 page CV for each instructor, and 2) a letter from each instructor's DEO indicating approval of the proposal, should be submitted via email to alia-gant@uiowa.edu by November 15, 2012.

Please contact Crossing Borders Director, Prof. Jennifer Sessions (jennifer-sessions@uiowa.edu, 353-2199) with any questions about the program or the seminars.

Facebook

The English Department is on Facebook! Go to <http://www.facebook.com/lowaEnglish> 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 December 6. Please send submissions for the next issue by 5:00pm on Wednesday, December 5 to [Erin Hackathorn](#).