

Volume 25, Issue 1

O Fortuna!

I'm pleased to introduce the first issue of *Reading Matters* for academic year 2019-20. Welcome back to EPB, English Department faculty and students! And, thank you to the English Department staff for keeping the Department operating smoothly over the summer and throughout the year. This fall good fortune arrives in fours! We welcome to English four new faculty members: **Louisa Hall, William Rhodes, Elizabeth Rodriguez Fielder**, and **Bennett Sims**; four Provost's Visiting Writers: **Julie Kedzie, Andy King, Nina Morrison**, and **Natalia Reyes**; four new or returning Visiting Assistant Professors: **Nellene Benhardus, Matthew Blackwell, Taney Kurth**, and **Spenser Santos**; four new or returning Adjunct Professors: **Tameka Cage-Conley, Tom Keegan, Liz Lundberg**, and **Emmet Rensin**. And, in a forced quatrain, we welcome returning Adjunct Professor **Keenan Walsh**, new cohorts of Nonfiction Writing MFA students, MA and PhD students, and Undergraduate Advisor **Allison Wanger**!

This past weekend, the English Department held its annual fall reception, a moment that usually marks a collective settling in to the new semester and, in my case, to a predictable cycle of administrative tasks—but thus far, the tasks have been anything but predictable! I'm digging deep into my first-year undergraduate humanities education to help me navigate the dreamworld that is institutional longevity. So, thank you to Heraclitus and Professor Stephen Tifft for teaching me, "No man ever steps into the same river twice, for it's not the same river, and he's not the same man." And thank you to the anonymous 13th century poet and Professor Thomas M. Greene for teaching me how to interpret the budget that arrived yesterday afternoon: "*O Fortuna/velut luna/statu variabilis/semper crescis/aut decrescis...*" Speaking of great humanists, it is an honor to work with James O. Freedman Professor of Letters **Garrett Stewart**, who has published four (4!) books in the past two years. Please take a look at the interview with Professor Stewart by PhD candidate **Ben Kirbach**, which appears on the front page of the English Department [website](#).

Have a wonderful fall semester, everyone! Life is flux!

Faculty Matters

Congratulations to **Kathleen Diffley**, who has received a subvention from the UI College of Liberal Arts & Sciences to support the production of her forthcoming co-edited book, *Visions of Glory: The Civil War in Word and Image* (University of Georgia Press).

Congratulations to **Ed Folsom** on the occasion of the Whitman Archive and the University of Iowa being awarded another NHPRC grant for 2019-2020. The grant will support the ongoing transcription of Whitman's correspondence as part of the project titled "Fame and Infamy: Walt Whitman's Correspondence, 1888-1892."

Eric Gidal's most recent article, co-authored with Michael Gavin of the University of South Carolina, "[Infrastructural Semantics: Postal Networks and Statistical Accounts in Scotland, 1790-1845](#)" was published in the *International Journal for Geographic Information Science*.

Congratulations to **Marie Kruger**, who received an International Programs Stanley International Travel Award in order to support her research in South Africa.

Anne Stapleton published two essays: "The Waverly Project," in *Engaging the Age of Jane Austen: Public Humanities in Practice* (U of Iowa Press, editors Bridget Draxler and Danielle Spratt), and "Youthful Visionaries in Margaret Oliphant's *Fin-de-Siècle* Fiction," in *The Land of Story-Books: Scottish Children's Literature in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Scottish Literature International, editors Sarah Dunnigan and Shu-Fang Lai).

Congratulations to **Harry Stecopoulos**, who has received a subvention from the UI College of Liberal Arts & Sciences to support the production of his edited volume, *The Cambridge History of the Literature of the U.S. South* (Cambridge University Press).

Congratulations to **Jon Wilcox**, who was [one of three UI faculty awarded a prestigious Fulbright grant for 2019](#). Wilcox traveled to the University of Iceland in Reykjavik this semester to teach two classes, guest-lecture on the culture of Anglo-Saxon England, and to conduct research on Viking culture.

Grad Matters

Laura Hayes and **Maddison McGann** participated in the thirty-ninth annual Dickens Project Research Institute and Conference at UC Santa Cruz this summer. Laura helped to organize social and networking events for Dickens Universe graduate students and faculty members. Maddison participated in the Co-teaching Workshop, in which each teaching pair taught a class that focused on closely reading *Barnaby Rudge*.

Julia Lucas is retracing the steps of her great, great, great grandmother - and documenting the journey - as part of her MFA thesis project. The story is featured as a series on the [Graduate College website](#).

Congratulations to English PhD students **Paul Schmitt** and **Kathleen Shaughnessy** who completed Obermann/Humanities for the Public Good Internships with Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development (IVRCD) this summer. Paul worked with IVRCD on a flood resiliency plan for the community of Vinton. Kathleen worked with IVRCD to document a series of historic rural sites that

are part of the Iowa Scenic Byways programs, visiting 40 Iowa communities in 40 days.

Stefan Schoeberlein received the [D. C. Spriestersbach Dissertation Prize 2019 - Humanities and Fine Arts](#) from the UI Graduate College in recognition of the excellence of his doctoral dissertation: "Cerebral Imaginaries: Brains and Literature in the Transatlantic Sphere, 1800-1880." The winner of the Spriestersbach Dissertation Prize receives \$2,500 and is selected as the University of Iowa's nominee in the national competition for the 2019 Council of Graduate Schools/ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award.

Anna Williams' dissertation was recently featured on an episode of the podcast [Phantom Power](#).

Undergrad Matters

Jeffrey Clark (BA English) was awarded a [Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship Award](#) and will travel to South Korea, where he plans to help Korean students in their English and cultural understanding of the world. Jeffrey is one of a record 19 UI students awarded Fulbright U.S. Student Program grants this year.

Staff Matters

Allison Wanger joins the department as an Academic Advisor for undergraduate students. She received her PhD in American Studies from the University of Iowa and her B.A. and M.A. in American Studies from California State University-Fullerton. She has most recently been working at Miami University as a Visiting Assistant Professor of American Studies. She will have her office in 310 EPB and will take over advisees in English, Communications and possibly Journalism. Please welcome her to the department after her arrival on September 30th!

Corey Campbell's latest short story, drawing from her experiences volunteering for CommUnity Crisis Services, was just named a semi-finalist for *American Short Fiction's* Halifax Ranch Prize. Also, she [reviewed Maryse Meijer's story collection Rag \(FSG\) for the journal Waxwing](#).

Alumni Matters

Heidi Bean (English PhD 2010) is now an associate professor at Bridgewater State University: https://services.bridgew.edu/Directory/search_person.cfm?personList=1617.

Adam Bradford (English PhD 2010) is an associate professor at Florida Atlantic University, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for the College of Arts and Letters,

and Director of the College of Arts and Letters' PhD program in Comparative Studies: <https://www.fau.edu/artsandletters/office-of-the-dean/>. Congratulations to **Blake Bronson-Bartlett** (English PhD 2014) who accepted a position as Associate Editor on the Mark Twain Project at the University of California, Berkeley.

Joanna Davis-McElligatt (English PhD 2010) has moved to the University of North Texas, where she is now an assistant professor (TT): <http://english.unt.edu/people/joanna-davis-mcelligatt-phd>.

Jessica DeSpain (English PhD 2008), associate professor at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville has recently been awarded the William and Margaret Going Endowed Professorship, and she is also Co-Director of the Southern Illinois University Interdisciplinary Research and Informatics Scholarship Center (IRIS): <https://www.siue.edu/news/2018/02/CAS-Presents-Distinguished-Going-Award-to-Jessica-DeSpain.shtml>.

Nick Dolan (English BA 2019) wrote an article for *Little Village* titled "[Learning to love 'Iowa's ugliest building.'](#)"

Jeff Doty (English PhD 2008) is now an associate professor at North Texas and Director of Undergraduate Studies: <http://english.unt.edu/people/jeff-doty-phd>. Congratulations to **Douglas G. Dowland** (English PhD 2010), whose book *Weak Nationalisms: Affect and Nonfiction in Postwar America* has been published by the University of Nebraska Press. In addition, Dowland's article "[Nationalism and the Limits of Inquiry](#)" was published in *The Rambling*, an online journal of critical and cultural criticism co-sponsored by the University of California Los Angeles and Wright State University.

On November 13-14, we will welcome **Carolyn Lukensmeyer** (English BA 1967) to campus as a [Distinguished Alumni Fellow](#).

Sean Meehan (English PhD 2002) is now Professor and Chair of English at Washington College: <https://www.washcoll.edu/live/profiles/1786-sean-meehan>.

Congratulations to **Wanda Raiford** (English PhD, 2013) who has been named Director of the Liberal Studies Program at Florida International University.

Congratulations to **Michael Ripa** (English & Creative Writing BA, 2018), who was accepted to a graduate program at NYU where he will complete an MS in publishing. Michael will also intern at Simon & Schuster this fall.

Congratulations to **Kathryn Scanlan** (English BA, 2003) who published her debut book *Aug 9-Fog* (Macmillan, 2019), which was a *Paris Review* Staff Pick, one of *Chicago Tribune's* 25 Hot Books of Summer, and one of *The A.V. Club's* 15 Most Anticipated Books of 2019. An excerpt of the book was published on [Publishers Weekly](#).

Emeritus Matters

Professor Emerita **Patricia Foster** received a Pushcart Prize for her essay, "Eulogy," which was published in *Ploughshares*.

In Memoriam

The English Department is saddened to learn recently of the passing of **Steve McNutt** ([MFA 2007](#)).

Amy Mulligan (University of Notre Dame) won the 2019 Four Courts Press/ASIMS Michael Adams Prize for best article or essay in medieval Irish Studies for "Poetry, sinew, and the Irish performance of lament: keening a hero's body back together," published in *Philological Quarterly* 97.4 (2018), 389-408, an English Department journal edited by **Eric Gidal**. Dr. Mulligan wrote the article, in part, in memory of her mentor, **Claire Sponsler**, who served as her professor in English at the University of Iowa.

Upcoming Matters

Obermann Center for Advanced Studies 3MT Workshop - September 20, 2019 | 3:00-4:30 pm | Obermann Center (111 Church) | **Register at bit.ly/3MTworkshop.**

Obermann Humanities 3MT Competition - September, 27, 2019 | 4:00-5:30 pm | Iowa City Public Library (123 S. Linn St.), Room A | **Sign up at <http://bit.ly/OC-3MT>.**

"How to Write a Sentence," James Geary, Ida Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor - October 3, 2019 | 10:30 am | Gerber Lounge, 304 EPB

"Five Ways to be Witty," James Geary, Ida Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor - October 3, 2019 | 5:15-6:30 pm | Shambaugh Auditorium, UI Main Library

NWP Nonfiction Master Class with Melissa Febos - October 4, 2019 | 3:30-5:30 pm | 403 EPB

NWP Poetry Master Class with Donika Kelley - October 4, 2019 | 3:30-5:30 pm | 331 EPB

"Hearing - and writing - voices," James Geary, Ida Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor - October 4, 2019 | 4:00 pm | Gerber Lounge, 304 EPB

"Who do you read?" Panel Discussion with Ida Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor James Geary - October 5, 2019 | 1:00 pm | Masonic Building (312 E. College)

Reading by Donika Kelley and Melissa Febos - October 5, 2019 | 2:30 pm | Prairie Lights

EC Meeting - October 7, 2019 | 10:30 am | 331 EPB

Faculty Colloquium: Kathy Lavezzo, "Wandering Women: Gender, Antisemitism and the English City" - October 7, 2019 | 3:30 pm | Gerber Lounge, 304 EPB

Linda Gregerson, Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar - October 10-11, 2019

The Krause Series in Contemporary Nonfiction: Susan Steinberg - October 11, 2019 | 7:00 pm | Prairie Lights

Faculty Meeting - October 14, 2019 | 10:30 am | Gerber Lounge, 304 EPB