



Out of IOWA

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

FALL 2023

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Dear Friends of English,

Welcome to *Out of Iowa* 2023, which marks another year of milestones and new ambitions for one of the country’s most vibrant departments. A quick look at the following pages will show you why: we are winning major grants to give students hands-on experience making books, we’re engaging the broader community at the Center for Worker Justice, and faculty, students, and alumni are publishing their own exciting new works. No wonder we’ve been named the country’s top public university for writing by *U.S. News and World Reports*. This is my first year as chair, and every day I feel grateful to lead a department with such an important history and exciting future. This newsletter captures both heritage and potential, as it marks the passing of influential figures like Professor John Huntley (1927-2023), milestones such as the retirement of Professor Brooks Landon, and the induction of alumnus Mary Swander into the Iowa Women’s Hall of Fame, and new developments such as the opening of the Nonfiction Writing House and hiring of two

new faculty into that program. This term, we’ve already had visits from Gayatri Spivak, who reminded us that the fields of postcolonial studies and translation studies grew out of our department, and Pulitzer-winning alum Jane Smiley, who reminded us that we have a long tradition of forging innovative forms of the PhD dissertation. This is a legacy we’re fully embracing, as we position our PhD program as an integral part of “The Writing University.” In fact, the program will feature prominently at this year’s Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference in Kansas City, in April. If you’re in town, please come see us at the alumni gathering hosted by the University of Iowa. And if you’re not, please get in touch: we want to know what our friends and alumni are doing, and we rely on your support for all that we do. Indeed, as we approach the year’s end, I really hope you’ll [consider a gift](#) to help build our reputation as one of the country’s best English Departments.

Finally, thanks to English Department alum and former *Iowa Review* intern Quinlan Stafford for all their excellent work on this issue.

Best wishes for the Holiday Season and the New Year!

Blaine Greteman

“Making is a kind of knowing:” exploring book history with a hands-on approach



Miller, far left, carving Chinese characters into a wood block during a lab section of the course

“It was a blast!” shared Professor of English Matthew Brown about developing “The Book In Global History,” a new course that uses book arts to immerse students in the study of book history. The development of the course was supported by a three-year Humanities Initiative Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant provides \$150,000 in funding for the costs of a book arts laboratory, supporting a teaching assistant, and developing programs to expose students to book studies. Brown co-wrote the grant alongside history and book studies professor Elizabeth Yale.

Through lectures, book lab sessions, discussions, and Special Collections visits, undergraduate students explored the history of the book in pre-modern East Asia, 16th-century Mesoamerica and New Spain, and the 19th-century Black Atlantic world. The course was taught by Brown, Yale, and graduate teaching assistant Sarah Parr this past spring semester. They selected readings to show how crafts and craftspeople were perceived in the past. “I had a blast,” said undergraduate English and creative writing student Miranda Miller about the class, echoing her professor's sentiment. In detailing a

main takeaway from the course, she observed that studying each culture and period of time reveals that “your language and culture inform your printing techniques.”

Book studies lab work and hands-on learning were the primary focus of the course. Readings were coupled with making paper, carving wood blocks for printing, stitching butterfly bindings, and printing their own versions of 19th-century newspapers. “My favorite thing about this course was the hands-on aspect,” Miller stated. In expressing his hopes for what students took from the labs, Brown shared that “Craft makes one slow down, reflect, and consider the choices that go into the making of an object. This helps one in both the creating and the appreciating of art.” For English majors, in particular, it is important to not only understand the text you are reading but also the ways in which it is presented to you.

Students finished their semester by creating research-based, creative final projects reflecting the craft techniques, research skills, and knowledge they had learned. “A highlight was seeing students immerse themselves in the lab work, resulting in especially rewarding final projects,” detailed Brown. Miller’s own project blossomed from a passing remark in a reading into a fifteen-page short story about a medium-sized French printing press celebrating the holiday of Wayzgoose, complete with an appendix, timeline, and character list.

Brown commented, “In terms of book studies and the history of craft, Prof. Yale and I hope to demonstrate that making is a kind of knowing – we want to break down divides between disciplines that separate hand and mind.” Brown and Yale, in collaboration with faculty, library staff, and graduate students from across the university plan to incorporate more hands-on study in courses across the humanities. ♡

English@the Center for Worker Justice

This summer, professor of English Claire Fox, doctoral candidate in English Riley Hanick, and undergraduate student Emily Harkin taught English classes for The Center of Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa. With the mission of uniting low-wage workers across race, ethnicity, and immigration status to promote and defend workers’ rights on the job, just immigration policies, and more equitable communities, the CWJ hosts English classes in support of immigrant families.

Alongside CWJ staff and volunteers, Fox, Hanick, and Harkin developed curriculum and presentations for weekly or biweekly English as a second language classes. Each week of classes was organized around a specific topic, such as school, work, the store, or visiting the doctor’s office, along with vocabulary and verb conjugations. Some of their content shifted or expanded depending on interest and relevance, such as a lesson themed on transportation aligning with the announcement that Iowa City’s buses would be fare-free.

The goal of these classes was to make it accessible to learn and practice English. “Knowing English creates opportunities,” said Harkin, who is majoring in English with minors in political science and criminology, law, and justice, “so being able to have my learned knowledge from the university to really help people with the ESL classes was a great thing.” Hanick, whose work focuses on questions of infrastructure, noted “The infrastructure that keeps us alive has everything to do with relationality and the ways we need one another [...] We build it by putting it to use. I want a world where people can learn things for free.” The classes were free and hosted in the evenings after traditional work hours. Attendance was not mandatory, encouraging students to come and learn when they were available.

Each of their journeys to teaching the ESL courses was different. Harkin started as a summer intern with the CWJ. She made social media posts, communicated with state representatives about wage theft issues, and collaborated with a community organizer. Fox had been aware of the Center for years, occasionally appearing on panels or attending events, but had wanted to dig in deeper with her support. She offered her skills as an English

professor and translator around the same time that Harkin and a CWJ staff member were tasked with coordinating some summer instruction programs. The idea for an English conversation course blossomed from there. “The number of people who signed up was so great,” Fox recalled. She put the word out to see if anyone would be willing to help with multiple English courses. Hanick answered the call, with a mere four hours between saying yes and the first class meeting.

When asked what those within the English Department should know about the CWJ, each person shared an urgency for more support and encouraged involvement from faculty and students. “I think that the closure of Kirkwood’s Iowa City campus left a significant gap [in free ESL course offerings] that has remained largely unfilled. Creating recurrent opportunities for UI students to engage ESL learners at the CWJ in comparatively informal conversation feels like it could serve as one starting point for a potentially rewarding partnership,” Hanick shared in an interview. “They’re a really important community organization that serves people who are our neighbors and might eventually be coming to the University of Iowa. We have a lot to offer, just through sharing our expertise in English. [...] I think there could be a much bigger English language program if we had more volunteers. I wish I could teach [these classes], constantly,” Fox stated. ♡



Artwork featured at the Center for Worker Justice's Annual Gala

Welcoming New Faculty

Tisa Bryant joins the English Department as an Assistant Professor, coming to the University of Iowa after teaching at the California Institute of the Arts.

Bryant is the author of a collection of hybrid essays titled *Unexplained Presence* (Leon Works, 2007). She is the co-editor of the journal *The Encyclopedia Project* and editor of the anthology *War Diaries* alongside Ernest Hardy. Her essays have appeared in exhibition catalogs for several visual artists and in a catalogue of site-specific art from The New School.

Bryant has presented several cinema essays, most recently at ALOUD's "School of Prince" event and "Speak Nearby," a symposium inspired by Trinh T. Minh-ha. She was a writer and researcher for Clockshop's Radio Imagination, a celebration of science fiction writer Octavia Butler.

Bryant has several forthcoming works: essays in the anthology *Letters to the Future: Black Experimental Women Writers* and *Residual*, a meditation on grief, longing, desire, and archival research, from Nightboat Books. In addition, she is working on *The Curator*, a novel of Black female subjectivity and imagined cinema.



Sarah Minor joins the English Department and Nonfiction Writing Program as an Assistant Professor.

Minor is the author of the books *Slim Confessions: The Universe as a Spider or Spit* (Noemi Press, 2021) and *Bright Archive* (Rescue Press, 2020), as well as a hybrid chapbook, *The Persistence of The Bonyleg: Annotated* (Essay Press, 2016).

Her work has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Ninth Letter*, *Diagram*, *Mid-American Review*, and elsewhere. Her essays have been included in *A Harp in the Stars: An Anthology of Lyric Essays*, *Advanced Creative Nonfiction: A Writer's Guide and Anthology*, *Welcome to the Neighborhood*, selected for Best Experimental Writing 2019, and named Notable in Best American Essays.

In addition, Minor serves as the Cinemoetry and Video Essay Section Editor at *TriQuarterly Review*. Minor is the recipient of an Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award, the Barthelme Prize in Short Prose, and fellowships from The Vermont Studio Center, the Kenyon Writer's Workshop, and the American Scandinavian Foundation.

Spotlight on the NWP: An Interview with Bonnie Sunstein



Cutting the ribbon of the new Nonfiction Writing House!

A new chapter begins for the Nonfiction Writing Program! The new Nonfiction Writing House had a dedication ceremony on Friday, September 22, 2023. The two-story, 3,500-square-foot building joins the Iowa Writer's Workshop's Dey House and the International Writing Program's Shambaugh House on Clinton Street, as a piece of what UI President Barbara Wilson calls "writer's row." Initial plans for a nonfiction program building were halted by the 2008 campus flood. John D'Agata, the director of the NWP from 2013 to 2020, spearheaded the effort to build a new home for the program. The success of the 2018 Broadway play adaptation of his book *The Lifespan of a Fact* aided in fundraising for the entirely donor-funded building.

The prestigious three-year MFA program was founded nearly 50 years ago in 1976 and has gained international acclaim, and taught several prominent nonfiction writers. This year the NWP welcomes two new faculty members, Tisa Bryant and Sarah Minor, who will contribute to the vibrant future of the program.

As part of this new chapter, Professor Bonnie Sunstein received a grant to record the educational history of the Nonfiction Writing Program. She joined the UI Faculty in 1992 and became an instrumental figure within the NWP and English Department. Out of Iowa writer Quinlan Stafford met with Sunstein to discuss the new building, her history with the English Department, and the future of the NWP.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Quinlan Stafford: How was the dedication celebration of the new building?

Bonnie Sunstein: Oh, it was wonderful. It was so exciting! I played the role of the ambassador, because I've been teaching in the Nonfiction Program longer than anybody who's currently here. I stood by the guestbook to welcome people. And what was really wonderful for me was that I knew some of the older people that came that other people didn't know and, of course, I also knew a lot of the younger people, I taught them all. It was very exciting for me to stand in that place where I recognize everybody and it was a joy to talk to everybody.

QS: What are you most excited for about the new building?

BS: I love the new building. I think it's wonderful. My office is still in EPB, but that's partly because I wanted everybody to have a space that they would be able to have for a long time. I don't know when I'm gonna retire but it'll be within the next few years. Then, when the new building got finished, I changed my mind. I felt terrible. I said, "Oh my God, this is so beautiful." But I'm in there a lot. I love the new building. I love the the porch on the outside. It's so peaceful compared to other parts of the campus and that's something that was a surprise to me.



QS: You received a grant for a digital archive of the NWP's history. Would you share more about that grant and what you are hoping to archive with it?

BS: It's in conjunction with another project that I've been working on for a while. It's for an open education resource. It's something that nobody has been able to do before: to be able to put resources online and open for anybody who wants to see them.

I've been working in the nonfiction program now for 24 years and I have 23 years worth of syllabi and course materials, exercises, sources, book recommendations, and lists of really good books for people to look at. And I can tell you, I feel both proud and embarrassed to say that I'm sure that this is one of the best nonfiction resources for undergraduates that there is. The OER is legal since it goes through the library. We can just put this stuff up online and people have access to all those materials, but not just University of Iowa students, anybody who wants access can have them, which makes it very, useful and very accessible to people in ways that they've never had before. That's really exciting. I am working with Jessie Kraemer, a graduate student, and we're in the process of setting it up now. By the end of this academic year, we'll have this OER set up and able for people to look at and borrow whatever they want. I'm really thrilled.

We're working with the Digital Publishing Studio to create a Press Books site that can serve as a pillar of the teaching nonfiction curriculum. We want to make our resources searchable.

I'll read out to you what we said in the proposal: "This resource will be a living, interactive document for the Nonfiction Writing Program that will be updated annually as we teach courses. It will prioritize student voices and needs in housing community nonfiction teaching materials. It will function primarily in two dynamic ways: as an archive, it will illustrate how nonfiction courses have been taught in decades past and as a living document, it will sustain a common space to adapt our curriculum in years to come."

The other thing that we're connecting it to is that I'm working on book four, this will be a book from University of Chicago Press about teaching nonfiction. It would be be ridiculous to put all of [the



A conference room in the Nonfiction Writing House. Photo by Tamara-Jo Schaapherder.

archived teaching materials] into a book. It makes me feel very good that we can focus on the book and we can accompany it with the archive.

QS: With this archive and the new building, what do you see as future plans for the NWP?

BS: Well, one of the great things about the NWP, that always has been true in the 24 years that I've been here, is that we all are different. We're all very different as writers, as people, as teachers. Each one of us has a particular skill and the other ones don't have. And we really like each other for that. We really admire each other and really like each other's work, because we're all so different.

I know that the future is going to be different from the past. And I'm very proud to be able to say at this point in my career, that I see both these projects as the legacy of my contribution to the nonfiction program, which has been mostly teaching undergraduate courses and working with TAs who teach undergraduate courses. I've been doing that since 2000.

For me, to answer your question, is to say, I don't know what's going to stay the same. And I don't know what's going to change. Sarah Minor, for example, has done a lot more with

contemporary technology. She's a very different kind of writer. One of the things I love about the new building is that the the there's a room that's totally set for any kind of electronic projects we might be able to do. Those are two examples.

QS: On that note, Would you like to share some highlights from your 23 years with the NWP and English Department?

BS: I think that these two projects, and the fact that they're coming together this way, are very exciting. I'm really excited that I can finish the book now and make it work with the archive.

I've been able to teach a couple of my dream courses. I am an ethnographer. I do ethnographic research, which is just basically work out in the field writing about what's actually there. Writing about what one scholar calls "just being there." I've taught a few courses that I never thought I'd be able to teach. One was called "Family Stories, Oral Histories, and Object Biographies." How do you get to the history of an object? How do you do a portrait of an object as is as if it's a person with a history? And what do we know when we study people, based on the family stories that they know

In Memoriam: John Huntley (1927 - 2023)

about? How those family stories shaped? One of the things I'm professionally good at is portraiture. It's creating word portraits of people. And I've had a wonderful chance to do that work both with undergraduates and graduates.

I do have to say what kind of undergraduates we have in Iowa. We have such wonderful students in the in the creative writing major and publishing major. Another thing that that I've done since the beginning is an opportunity for our undergraduate students to read at Prairie Lights, called Writers Gone Public. If I were a student in the creative writing, in any of the writing programs, to be able to read at Prairie Lights, where I've gone to see a lot of professional readers, it would be a wonderful thing. So I'm very proud of that.

I've certainly loved every course I've taught taught, so I don't want to just pick one out. I have a background that's related to anthropology and every chance I get to write or teach about it in relationship to writing is a very exciting chance for me.

One of the things everybody can tell you, and all you have to do is walk into the building; you can see how many books people who have been in this

program have published. *But*, what doesn't show and what I'm determined to have people know, is how many people who have been in the Nonfiction Program are now teaching nonfiction in other places. I think the last time we counted, we were covering about 70% of the professorships in nonfiction that were out there in the country. So, our students are very, very, very well prepared to be teachers too. And I take some credit for that. That's been my job all this time is to help people who are in the Nonfiction Program, who think they don't necessarily want to be in publishing, learn how to teach. One of the things that I'm very proud of is that we've sent a lot of our graduates out as teachers, and it's because we do have an emphasis on teaching nonfiction. I'm a scholar of the teaching of writing, so I know a lot about educational theory, and how it informs what we do. It helped all of this in the past and will continue to help.

I have to remind myself that we have to let our our programs be what they are, and we have to let them evolve. It's like, parenthood, when they're ready to be independent. You have to let them go. ♡



Exterior of the Nonfiction Writing House, including the peaceful porch. Photo by Tamara-Jo Schaapherder.



For nearly four decades, John Faringdon Huntley was an invaluable member of the English faculty at the University of Iowa.

Huntley completed a master's degree at the University of Connecticut and finished his Ph.D. in English Literature as a Carnegie Fellow at the University of Chicago, studying Milton. He completed a Fulbright in London.

Huntley served as an English Professor at the university from 1957 to 1996. His teaching reflects his capacious mind and interests. He shepherded countless students through reading and writing about the works of John Milton; he crafted the "Writing for the Sciences" course, emphasizing the value of the craft of writing for science students; and taught the university's first African American literature course. As a professor and scholar, Huntley was a forerunner of the "digital humanities" – a field that utilizes computational tools and methods to examine literature. He published his findings in articles, such as "Teaching Milton by Computer" in the *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 1991. He was instrumental in creating the University of Iowa sailing club.

He served as the chairman of the Mississippi Support Project, a 1964 voter registration drive aimed at increasing the number of registered Black voters in Mississippi. In this role, he worked alongside then-university President Sandy Boyd to mobilize volunteers down to Mississippi to support this drive, also called Freedom Summer. Huntley also publicly defended non-violent resistance in this role.

Huntley was born on May 16th, 1927 to Frank Livingston Huntley and Katharine Maud Burgner in Oberlin, OH. Huntley was the eldest of five children, and enjoyed a portion of his childhood in Kyoto, Japan before his family traversed the world by boat, sparking his love for sailing. They then settled in Menomonie, Wisconsin. Prior to becoming a professor, he enlisted in the US Navy during World War II. He spent his days in the Navy as a Yeoman on a Destroyer Escort, which patrolled the Eastern Seaboard on the USS Foss. In the evenings, he regaled his shipmates by writing short stories on the captain's typewriter, in exchange for a few nickels. He was honorably discharged after 1 year and 8 days of service. In retirement, he became proficient in open ocean celestial navigation, sailed the world, and taught advanced sailing to many younger pupils.

John Huntley died peacefully in Colorado Springs, CO, on the morning of July 9th, 2023 after a brief illness. He was 96. In remembering his respected scholarship and deep commitment to his students and colleagues, The University of Iowa English Department honors his memory. ♡



Huntley, far right, alongside other English Department faculty members in the 1960's



Kaveh Akbar
Martyr!

Knopf

Cyrus Shams is newly sober, a poet, and an orphaned son of Iranian immigrants. His obsession with martyrs leads him to examine the mysteries of his past – toward an uncle who rode through Iranian battlefields dressed as the Angel of death to inspire and comfort the dying, and toward his mother, through a painting discovered in a Brooklyn art gallery that suggests she may not have been who or what she seemed.



Tara Bynum
Reading Pleasures

University of Illinois Press

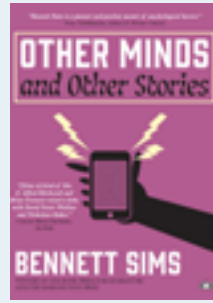
In the early United States, a Black person committed an act of resistance simply by reading and writing. Yet we overlook that these activities also brought pleasure. The poet Phillis Wheatley delights in writing letters to a friend. Ministers John Marrant and James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw memorialize their love for God. David Walker's pamphlets ask Black Americans to claim their victory over slavery. Together, their writings reflect the joyous, if messy, humanity inside each of them. *Reading Pleasures* analyzes the ways four Black writers experienced positive emotions and how they served creative, political, and racialized ends.



Louisa Hall
Reproduction

Ecco

A novelist attempts to write a book about Mary Shelley, a mother, author, and artist whose harrowing pregnancies reveal the cost of human reproduction. Soon, however, the novelist's own painful experiences of pregnancy and childbirth, as well as her increasing awareness of larger threats from climate change to pandemic, force her to give up on the book and turn instead to writing a contemporary *Frankenstein*, based on the story of an old friend who mysteriously reappears in her life. *Reproduction* is a powerful reminder of the hazards and the rewards involved in creating new



Bennett Sims
Other Minds and Other Stories

Two Dollar Radio

Twelve short stories expertly guide us through the paranoia and obsession of everyday horrors. A man lends his phone to a stranger in the mall, setting off an uncanny series of unknown calls that come to haunt his relationship with jealousy and dread. A well-meaning locavore tries to butcher his backyard chickens humanely, only to find himself absorbed into the absurd violence of the pecking order. A student applying for a philosophy fellowship struggles to project himself into the thoughts of his hypothetical judges, becoming possessed by the problem of other minds. And in "The Postcard," a private detective is hired to investigate a posthumous message that a widower has seemingly received from his dead wife.



Jonathan Wilcox
Humour in Old English Literature: Communities of Laughter in Early Medieval England

University of Toronto Press

Wilcox deploys modern theories of humor to explore the style and content of surviving writing from early medieval England. The book analyses riddles, wisdom literature, runic writing, the deployment of rhymes, and humor in heroic poetry, hagiography, and romance. The book presents a revisionist view of Old English literature, by reclaiming often-neglected texts and by uncovering ironies and embarrassments within well-established works. Wilcox suggests that the humor of Old English literature has been scantily covered in past scholarship because modern readers expect a dour and serious corpus. This book aims to highlight works and moments that are as entertaining now as they were then.



life, and a feminist exploration of motherhood, childbirth, female friendship, and artistic ambition.

Garrett Stewart

The Metanarrative Hall of Mirrors: Reflex Action in Fiction and Film

Bloomsbury

The first sustained comparative study of how image patterns are tracked in prose and cinema. In film examples ranging from *Citizen Kane*, *Apocalypse Now* and *Blade Runner 2049*, to *Tenet*, Stewart follows the shift from celluloid to digital cinema through various narrative manifestations of the image, from freeze-frames to computer-generated special effects. By bringing cinema alongside literature, Stewart discovers a common tendency in contemporary storytelling, in both prose and visual narrative, from the ongoing trend of "mind-game" films to the often puzzling narrative eccentricities of such different writers as Nicholson Baker and Richard Powers.



Chris Merrill
On the Road to Lviv

Boston: Arrowsmith Press

"This chronicle/ Took shape the day the war began, which was/ My 65th birthday," writes Merrill. At once deeply personal yet rooted in recent history, the poem is equal parts chronicle, a document of war crimes, and a sober self-reflection in which the poem's speaker examines his own engagement with Ukraine as a "democratic-minded" Westerner "determined to develop/ Civil societies around the world." Appears en face with Nina Murray's masterly translation into Ukrainian.



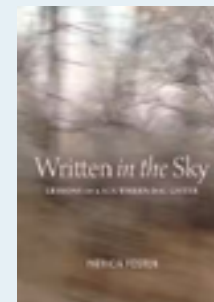
Sukhyang & Sugyong's Tales: Two Romantic Novels from Old

Korea

Paramus: Homa & Sekey

Sukhyang's Tale is known as a masterpiece of women's narrative from 17th century Korea. The tale evolves around the love story of Sukhyang and Yi Sŏn, from Sukhyang's ordeals of being separated from her parents during a bandit riot to her reunion with, and marriage to, Yi Sŏn before ascending to heaven together. In *Sugyong's Tale*, a romance between Sugyong and her lover Sŏn'gun has a tragic twist. Through the use of fantasy, it portrays the anguish of the era.

Translated from the Korean by Sohn Tae Soo, Won-Chung Kim, and Christopher Merrill, the two novels dually explore the difficulty of finding true love and how a woman has to face the absurdities of a medieval Chosŏn society defined by gender discrimination and Neo-Confucian ethics.



EMERITUS FACULTY

Patricia Foster
Written in the Sky: Lessons of a Southern Daughter

University of Alabama Press

Foster presents a double portrait of place and family in a book of deeply personal essays that interrogate the legacy of racial tensions in the South, the constriction of caste and gender, and the ways race, class, and white privilege are entwined in her family story. The story of place, she discovers, emerges not only from family histories and cultural traditions but also from wrestling with a culture's irreconcilable ideas: the hard push to determine what matters. After interviewing girls at Booker T. Washington High School in Tuskegee, Alabama, visiting the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, and exploring Africatown in Plateau, Alabama, Foster was moved to reflect on the racial scars and crossroads in her southern past as well as to reckon with the intimate places of her own wounding and grief.

Graduate Student Publications

Hannah Bonner published book reviews of Sarah Rose Etter's *Ripe* in the *Los Angeles Review of Books* and Kate Zambreno's *The Light Room* in the *Cleveland Review of Books*. She also published a review of Paul B. Preciado's film *Orlando, My Political Biography* in *Lit Hub*.

Heidie Senseman's short story "House of Worship" was published in *Vita Poetica*. Her essay "Lost" was published in *The Scribner*.

P.J. Zaborowski's article "Miso no Messenger: Death and Delivery in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*" was published in the spring 2023 issue of *Arthuriana*.

Alumni Publications



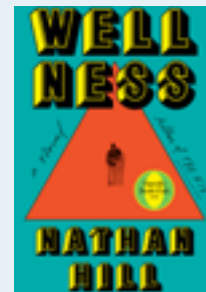
Taylor Brady (B.A. 2013) published a memoir: *There's No Place Like Home* with Barnes & Noble Press.

Keith Wilhite (PhD 2007) published *Contested Terrain: Suburban Fiction and U.S. Regionalism, 1945-2020*, with University of Iowa Press.



Tim Johnston's (B.A. 1985) novel, *Distant Sons*, is out from Algonquin/Hachette.

Nathan Hill's (B.A. 1999) novel, *Wellness*, is out from Knopf. It is a News York Times Bestseller and was an Oprah's Book Club pick in 2023.



Alumni Awards



Shane McCrae (M.A. 2012) won the Arthur Rense Poetry Prize, a prestigious accolade from the Academy of Arts and Letters, for *Cain Named the Animal* (Little Brown, 2022) and other works. His memoir, *Pulling the Chariot of the Sun: a Memoir of a Kidnapping*, was recently published by Scribner.

Alum inducted into Iowa Women's Hall of Fame

It's been an exciting year for English alum and former Iowa Poet Laureate Mary Swander (B.A. 1973 in English, M.F.A. 1976). She was inducted into the 2022 Iowa Women's Hall of Fame for her work promoting healthy agricultural practices through the arts.



Since 1975, the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women and the Governor have welcomed four women into the Hall of Fame to recognize their contributions and set them forth as role models.

Swander taught at Iowa State University for 30 years, achieving the title of Distinguished Professor. She was the Poet Laureate of Iowa from 2009-2019. She is best known for her poetry book *Driving the Body Back*, and for her memoirs *Out of this World* and *The Desert Pilgrim*. Her most recent book is *The Maverick M.D.: Dr. Nicholas Gonzalez and His Fight for a New Treatment for Cancer* (New Spring Press, 2020).

She is the executive director of AgArts, a nonprofit designed to imagine and promote healthy food systems through the arts. She hosts the podcast "AgArts from Horse & Buggy Land" which highlights sustainability and rural life. She is also the artistic director of Swander Woman Productions, a theater troupe that performs plays about food, farming and the wider rural environment. She has written and produced the plays *Farmscape*, *Vang*, and *Map of My Kingdom*. They have been performed in venues including the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, Mayo Clinic, and the U.S.D.A.

The University of Iowa English Department extends its deepest congratulations to Mary Swander and celebrates her contributions to the arts and agriculture in Iowa! ♡

Alum Produces Oscar Winner



Joe Russo (B.A. 1992) produced the 2023 Academy Award winner for Best Picture, *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. Released in March of 2022, the film follows Evelyn Wang (Michelle Yeoh), a Chinese American immigrant who runs a laundromat with her husband, Waymond (Ke Huy Quan). Evelyn has a lot on her plate: the IRS is auditing the laundromat, Waymond serves her divorce papers, her demanding father is visiting for a Chinese New Year's party, and, on top of it all, her relationship with her daughter is incredibly strained. An encounter at the IRS office between Evelyn and the universe-travelling Alpha-Waymond sparks the start of a "hilarious and big-hearted" adventure through the multiverse.

EAAA won an additional six Academy Awards: Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, Best Film Editing, Best Actress (Yeoh), Best Supporting Actor (Quan), and Best Supporting Actress (Jamie Lee Curtis). The film won a BAFTA for Best Editing, two Golden Globe Awards, five Critics' Choice Movie Awards, and seven Independent Spirit Awards nominations. The movie is regarded as "the most-awarded film ever" with over 158 awards from major critics organizations and awards bodies. It is also A24's highest grossing film to date. The University of Iowa English Department extends its deepest congratulations to Joe Russo for an incredible accomplishment. ♡

Happy Retirement to Dr. Brooks Landon

After over 45 years of exemplary service, teaching, and scholarship, Brooks Landon is retiring. Dr. Landon began at the University of Iowa as an Assistant Professor in 1978.

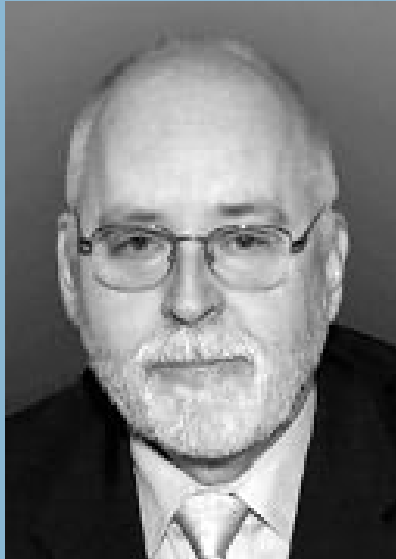
In his almost five-decade-spanning academic career, he served as English Department Chair, Director of the Nonfiction Writing Program, Director of the General Education Literature Program, and Director of Undergraduate Studies. He held the Herman J. and Eileen S. Schmidt Endowed Professorship from 2011 to 2016 and was appointed as the University College Miller Teaching Scholar. He is the winner of the Gerber Teaching Award, Honors Thesis Advisor Mentor Award, the Collegiate Fellows Award, the IAFA Distinguished Scholarship Award, and the M.L. Huit Teaching Award.

He pioneered courses in science fiction and film, nonfiction writing, contemporary American fiction, 20th-century American literature and culture, postmodern fiction, and the cultural impact of digital technologies. "I loved learning from someone with such a degree of thoughtfulness and care about science fiction," shared student Zachary Morris (B.A. 2023). Dr. Landon offered a prose-style course focused on the sentence since the start of his tenure at the university. His class on "Building Great Sentences" for The Great Courses series was one of the most popular and well-known

of the program. "There's no one in the country more informed about sentences than Brooks," Professor Emeritus Ed Folsom commented.

Dr. Landon is a foremost scholar of science fiction. He published several articles and reviews in *Science Fiction Studies*, and authored chapters for the *Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, *Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, *The Cambridge History of Science Fiction*, and *Reading Science Fiction*.

He wrote the introduction to the Easton Press edition of William Gibson's *Neuromancer*. He has given several presentations on "Building Great Sentences" throughout Iowa. He has presented on "Teaching Science Fiction at UC Riverside" and on "Grammar and the Politics of the English Language" at Cornell College. In addition to his scholarship and presentations, he is the author of five books. The most recent include *Building Great Sentences: How to Write the Sentences You Love to Read* (Viking/Plume, 2013) and *Understanding Thomas*



Berger (University of South Carolina Press, 2010).

"Brooks is the very spirit of this department—he cares deeply for his colleagues and his students and goes out of his way to help them," Folsom said. The English Department extends its heartfelt gratitude and best wishes to Brooks Landon. ♡

