



# Out of IOWA

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

FALL 2018

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### A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR: *CLAIRE F. FOX*



Professor and Chair of English Claire F. Fox

Dear Friends of the English Department, It gives me great pleasure to share with you highlights from the past year in this Fall 2018 issue of *Out of Iowa*. As we enter a new academic year, the English Department’s undergraduate programs continue to thrive. The Department now houses approximately 925 undergraduate majors, an increase of almost 100 students since last year. We are also seeing a dramatic increase in enrollment for the Literary Publishing Track, a new series of courses that is available to both the English and English & Creative Writing majors. Students are

arriving to the Department from all regions of the US, drawn to UI as the Writing University. The Department is now more diverse according to many metrics than the broader University, and consistent with University demographics, about 25% of our majors are first-generation college students. I am proud of these aspects of our profile, and I would

like to continue to nurture them going forward.

With so many undergraduates in English, we strive to create a liberal arts college environment within the larger research university by protecting small class sizes and encouraging cohorts and interest groups to develop among the undergraduates. This past year, English sponsored several high-impact learning experiences for our majors, including the addition of a semester-long Irish study abroad program to the popular summer Irish Writing Program. We provided scholarships to two English majors to attend a professional event for gaming developers, and we sent a small delegation to the Sigma Tau Delta (English Honors Society) International Convention.

One English & Creative Writing major who distinguished himself in our programs is Austin Hughes, whose Digital Humanities project is profiled in this issue. This past year Hughes was one of eighteen undergraduates in the nation to receive a 2018 Beinecke Scholarship, a highly selective fellowship created to offer young scholars of exceptional promise substantial financial support to pursue advanced degrees in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. English students account for

*(continued on page 12)*



## Digital Humanities at Iowa

*New technological tools revolutionize the ways we study literature*

At the intersection of new technology and humanistic inquiry, the digital humanities are changing the way scholars conduct, teach, and share research. With an open-source and collaborative ethos, the emerging field encompasses projects like digital mapping and publishing, digital archives, and data visualization, as well as the use of quantitative analysis and other computational tools to shed new light on basic questions of the humanities.

“Digital Humanities at the University of Iowa has a history that dates well before the term ‘DH’ came into vogue,” says Associate Professor Stephen Voyce, who was hired in 2011 as part of an initiative that saw Digital Humanities positions created in a diverse range of departments, including English, Classics, Art History, History, and Cinematic Arts, among others. “Ed Folsom’s Walt Whitman Archive and Timothy Shipe and Ruedi Kuenzli’s International Dada Archive were groundbreaking projects that laid the foundation for many of the subsequent DH projects undertaken in the English Department,” he says. “Building on their work, some of us have used DH tools to make obscure resources more readily available to communities far from university libraries and museums.”

The Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio (DSPS) was also established in 2011 and is housed in the UI Main Library, where it

is under the direction of English alum Tom Keegan (PhD 2010). Its goal was to support the research among the faculty initially hired into digital humanities positions, yet has since expanded to support all University of Iowa faculty engaged in DH research and collaboration. At the Studio, faculty work together with project managers, librarians, programmers, and graphic designers to create rigorous and visually engaging projects available to a wide public—some of which attract thousands of hits a month, from visitors all over the world.

The English Department is embracing the full potential of online media. These projects include digital repositories, such as Ed Folsom’s Walt Whitman Archive and Stephen Voyce’s Fluxus Digital Collection, to maps like Anne Stapleton’s plotting of real cities and towns named after Walter Scott’s Waverley novels and Kathy Lavezzo’s pathbreaking research on medieval cartographies—to name just a few examples. In a recent study of nineteenth-century Scotland and the mythical ancient bard Ossian, Eric Gidal developed new methodology to chart the correlations between language and geography. As Director of the International Writing Program, Chris Merrill offers online courses to writers across the globe. Throughout the Department, faculty are applying cutting-edge technological tools to transform the study and reception of the written word. ♡

## Faculty Digital Humanities Projects

*For readers of the print edition of Out of Iowa, please see this section in the online edition for links to these websites.*

### [William Morris Archive](#), **Florence Boos**

The official scholarly site for editions of William Morris’s literary works, calligraphy, Kelmscott Press books, and other publications. It is in the process of being moved into Omeka for sustainability and greater access.

### [Mabbott Poe](#), **Blake Bronson-Bartlett**

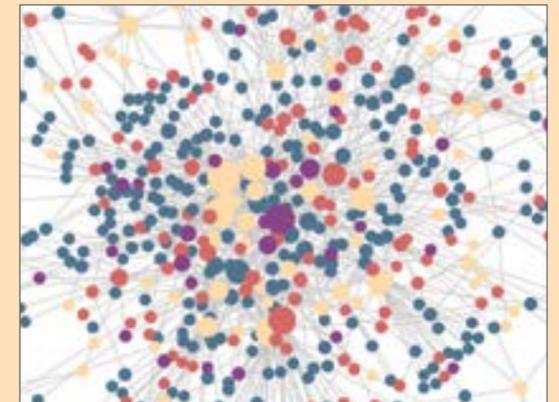
Mabbott Poe is an online resource based on the papers of Thomas Ollive Mabbott (1898-1968), editor of the three-volume *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*. (Pictured below.)



### [Shakeosphere: Mapping Early Modern](#)

#### [Social Networks](#), **Blaine Greteman**

Shakeosphere allows users to visualize, map, and explore these social networks in Shakespeare’s England and beyond, from 1473–1800. Our goal is to make it easy and intuitive to see and search the ways that books, letters, and other documents connected readers, writers, printers, publishers, and booksellers around the globe. (Pictured below)



### [Peoples’ Weather Map](#), **Barbara Eckstein**

The Peoples’ Weather Map is a web-based map of severe weather stories in Iowa. On the map, users can explore historical and recent severe weather events, through words and images, in individual counties.

### [The Walt Whitman Archive](#), **Ed Folsom**

Drawing on the resources of libraries and collections from around the world, the Walt Whitman Archive is the most comprehensive record of works by and about Walt Whitman—and it continues to grow.

### [The Latina/o Midwest Reader](#), **Claire F. Fox**

A companion website to *The Latina/o Midwest Reader*, with links to articles, videos, and other secondary sources related to each of the *Reader*’s chapters.

### [The Program Era Project](#), **Loren Glass**

The Program Era Project documents the aesthetic and cultural influence of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop by employing data visualization software to track connections between Workshop-affiliated writers and follow their migration into prominent positions at other creative writing programs.

### [The Books That Made Shakespeare](#), **Adam Hooks**

This digital exhibition allows users to explore the books Shakespeare read and used, the books that preserved his works, and the books that shaped his reputation and reshaped his textual afterlives.

### [Remappings: Christians and Jews in Early England](#), **Kathy Lavezzo**

Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies have revolutionized our ability to grasp how space, place and identity intersect. Remappings seeks to bridge the gap between old and new mapping processes to retell the story of Jewish-Christian interaction in England during the late 17th century.

### [International Digital Learning Program](#), **Chris Merrill**

The International Writing Program’s year-round digital learning courses and MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) bring American and international writers together in online classrooms. The Digital Learning Program has enrolled over 47,000 people from 197 countries and is free and open to anyone in the world.



English & Creative Writing major Austin Hughes received an Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates (ICRU) award to work with Blaine Greteman on Mapping Paul Engle's Letters. The project contributed to Hughes receiving the prestigious Beinecke Scholarship this year, a selective award created to offer young scholars of exceptional promise substantial financial support to pursue advanced degrees in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

## Faculty Digital Humanities Projects, continued

### [Under the Banner of Waverley](#), Anne Stapleton

Under the Banner of Waverley maps where and when the titular towns of Walter Scott's popular 19th-century novels were founded. It explores why the Waverley novels appealed to American readers, and illustrates how Scott's legacy continues into the 21st century.

### [Iowa Colored Conventions Project](#), Miriam Thaggert

The Iowa-CCP goals are to create an accessible digital archive in Midwestern Black history; connect that archive with several of Iowa's historical Black communities; advance scholarship on the nineteenth-century Black Midwest; and create new courses, curriculum, and teaching opportunities using Iowa-CCP material. See also the project Twitter feed (@IA\_CCP).

### [Fluxus Digital Collection](#), Stephen Voyce

This digital resource makes available the university's impressive collection of Fluxus art and ephemera, including drawings, paintings, sculptures, and writings by internationally acclaimed artists Ken Friedman, John Cage, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, and many others. (Pictured on page 2.)



### For further reading on the Digital Humanities

Eric Gidal's open-access article on computational methods, "[Scotland's Poetics of Space: An Experiment in Geospatial Semantics](#)" (*Cultural Analytics*, 16 November 2017), reports on a collaborative project between Professor Gidal and Professor Michael Gavin (University of South Carolina) that develops new applications of spatial textual analysis.

# Dada Futures

A fresh exhibit and symposium showcases Iowa's rich collection of radical art

**F**UN FACT: stowed within the library's vaults is a lock of hair cut during an event devised by Yoko Ono. An artifact from one of the acclaimed artist's early performance art pieces in 1966, the lock is now preserved in the University's famed Fluxus West collection.

The University of Iowa holds two of the most important avant-garde art collections in the world: the International Dada Archive and the Fluxus West Collection. The IDA, co-founded by Professor Emeritus Ruedi Kuenzli, was established forty years ago after a pathbreaking symposium on Dada held at UI. The *Dada Futures* symposium and exhibition, hosted this past spring, aimed to celebrate the achievements of Professor Kuenzli and IDA curator Dr. Timothy Shipe, but also to provoke further scholarship and art practice in the boundary-pushing "Dada spirit." Together with Kuenzli and Shipe, Associate Professor Stephen Voyce, Assistant Professor Jennifer Buckley, and Joyce Tsai, of the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art and the College of Education, hosted a symposium that gathered scholars from around the world.

The symposium also featured a lecture by artist Adam Pendleton on his multimedia "Black Dada" project. The *Dada Futures* exhibition drew from the IDA, the Fluxus West Collection, and UI Libraries Special Collections, with items ranging from Dada periodicals, prints, and performance photographs to Fluxus multiples and mail art. "It's irreverent, as any Dada exhibition must be, but it also showcases a part of the extraordinary history—and hopefully the future—of avant-garde art on this campus" says Buckley. ♡



Photos by Steve Erickson

## The City as Textbook

Students experience "living literature" in Iowa City

From the founding of the Writers' Workshop to its designation as a UNESCO City of Literature, Iowa City boasts a vibrant literary history and culture. Several regularly-taught English courses weave the critical with the creative, bringing literary topics alive by introducing students to the contemporary writers who are helping to define arts and letters today. Students in Loren Glass's "City of Literature" course come from a residence hall designated as the "Living Literature" Living and Learning Community. In Professor Glass's class, they have the opportunity to read poems, short stories, novels and essays by faculty and graduates of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, International Writing Program, and Nonfiction Writing Program along with reminiscences by writers about their time in Iowa City. In Kathleen



Diffley's course, "In Print/In Person," students study the work of acclaimed writers who regularly come through town to read from their new books. "International Literature Today," taught by Christopher Merrill, presents the works of writers in residence at the International Writing Program, who discuss their writing and the literary scene in their native countries. ♡

# English on the Go

In Iowa City, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Dublin, and places in between—Iowa undergraduates take learning beyond the classroom



Dublin, Ireland

## IOWA CITY, IA

For most students at the university, the English Department's graduate students put the "literature" in the "City of Literature." The numbers tell the story: last year, 66 graduate teaching assistants and four visiting assistant professors who were recent graduates of the PhD program taught 156 sections of General Education Literature courses for about 4,000 students. More than two-thirds of the instructors are in the English MFA or PhD programs, and about a quarter are from the Writers' Workshop. One of the most exciting recent developments in the program is the opportunity for service learning. Barbara Eckstein obtained a grant for a pilot program in which two classes from the program partner with a local elementary school to work with students on reading and writing—and to bring those students to campus for a culminating event to learn about the many opportunities at the University of Iowa. The school is in one of Iowa City's most underserved communities, and teachers have appreciated the chance it provides for one-on-one reading and discussion, noting that the "university students were great" and couldn't believe how quickly the time passed when they were deep in a book with a fourth grader. Thanks to a generous donation from Bill and Fran Irwin, Blaine Greteman will be working with teachers and graduate students over the next three years to build on the program's strengths.

## SAN FRANCISCO, CA

The English Department sent two of its majors on an imaginative cross-country adventure this spring. Participating in the annual Train Jam, undergraduate English & Creative Writing majors Gillian Herrin and Virginia Snyder traveled with a group of gaming developers by rail to the annual Game Developers Confer-

**"Train Jam taught me that even with talent in programming and artistry, the story still matters."**

—Gillian Herrin

ence held in San Francisco. In the course of the 52-hour train trip, these developers were faced with the ultimate creative challenge: to design on-the-fly a host of original video games. Herrin and Snyder are members of EPX, a UI student organization devoted to studying and creating video games, which, in their narrative and artistic elements, have become of increasing interest to English and English & Creative Writing majors. "I met many people and

have so many business cards that I now have a separate wallet to hold them in," Herrin says. "Train Jam taught me that even with talent in programming and artistry, the story still matters—even in simple games made in just under 52 hours."

## CINCINNATI, OH

English major Alexandra Chasteen received the distinction of having her research paper accepted by the annual conference of Alpha Tau Iota (ATI), the undergraduate chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society. Held in Cincinnati, the theme of the convention was "Seeking Freedom," inspired by the city's role in the Underground Railroad. Chasteen presented a paper on masculinity and diegetic functions of *Othello* in the classic 1945 French film, *Children of Paradise*. "Sigma Tau Delta has far more opportunities on the regional and national levels than I'd realized," says Chasteen, who traveled to Cincinnati with English professor and chapter sponsor Anne Stapleton. "I was also blown away by the professionalism—from the questions I was asked at my panel to how the attendees interacted with each other. I didn't feel at all like a student, which was very exciting for me since I'm only a sophomore." For Chasteen, who is considering a career in academia, the opportunity to present at the conference was an extraordinarily valuable one.

## DUBLIN, IRELAND

A handful of lucky UI undergraduates depart Iowa City each summer to immerse themselves in another famous city of literature. These students, selected among a competitive pool of applicants, enjoy the opportunity to study Irish literature and culture at University College Dublin, whose alumni include such literary

**"Ireland is a truly beautiful country rich in culture, and living there helped me grow immensely as both a person and a creative writer."**

—Allison Rowe

giants as Gerard Manley Hopkins and James Joyce. Directed for the past two summers by Philip H. Round, John C. Gerber Professor of English, this unique program helps young writers hone their craft in writing workshops and seminars, while also letting them take full advantage of Dublin's theaters, parks, and pubs. "I loved being able to step out of my comfort zone and into a company of collaborative and adventurous writers. Ireland is a truly beautiful country rich in culture, and living there helped me grow immensely as both a person and a creative writer," says UI undergraduate Allison Rowe. ♡

## Grad Focus: "Alt-Ac" and Humanities Without Walls

Iowa doctoral students chart new paths within and outside the academy



This summer, doctoral candidates Makayla Steiner and Lydia Maunz-Breese were appointed as fellows for a three-week career diversity workshop in Chicago hosted by Humanities Without Walls, a consortium of fifteen humanities centers housed in research universities across the Midwest and beyond. With the hope of fostering further innovation in pedagogy and research, the HWW consortium is the first of its kind to conduct such a large-scale collaboration among institutions.

The workshops explored what is colloquially known as "alt-ac," or "alternative academic" careers beyond the traditional tenure-track path. Among a cohort of thirty graduate students selected for their interdisciplinary academic interests, Steiner and Maunz-Breese convened with organizers of public humanities projects, leaders of university presses and learned societies, and digital humanities experts, as well as academic administrators, student services professionals, librarians and archivists, and development officers.

The goal of these discussions was to expose graduate students to an expanded view of the humanities—a vision they could take with them upon return to their home universities. "Prior to the workshop, my sense of my value as a PhD candidate had shrunk to such small proportions, I found it increasingly difficult to identify what worth or benefit all these years of striving towards my PhD have beyond seeking a tenure-track job," says Maunz-Breese, who is working on a doctoral dissertation about overlooked First World War-era women poets and their experiences of grief, the trauma of loss, and their connections to disability. "It helped me realize and appreciate how valuable humanities PhDs are, how desirable and vital, and that sustaining and nurturing the humanities is not a task limited to academe, but one with powerful importance beyond the walls of the academy." ♡

## An Interview with Distinguished Visiting Professor Kiese Laymon



In fall 2017, acclaimed writer Kiese Laymon joined the Nonfiction Writing MFA program as the Bedell Distinguished Visiting Professor. Hailed as “a sharply original and supremely powerful voice, an angry yet oddly poetic voice,” Laymon’s essays and fiction speak to the precariousness of black life, and the complexities of race, sexuality, and gender, in a country still haunted by violence. Anya Ventura (NWP MFA 2017) sat down with him to talk about his thoughts on art, politics, the Internet, and why he believes the essay will never go away.

**This semester you’re teaching a class called “Autobiographical Narrative Writing in the Age of Obama, Trump, the Internet, the 24-Hour News Cycle, and You.” Can you tell us more about it?** I wanted to teach a class about the way presidential power can inflict our writing, or maybe should. In the past, I had students who had a lot of political opinions but they weren’t sure how to

fit those political opinions seamlessly, artfully, into the work they were doing. We’re workshoping 800-to-1000-word pieces and they have to let us know before workshop where they want to place the piece. It’s about getting students to think about the politics of audience, and the role that capital-P politics plays in their art. Sometimes we dissuade people from writing through politics because it’s easy to write clunkily through politics.

In the first few weeks, we talked about this distinction between what some critics call the whisper and a proclamation. I went into the class with the assumption that a lot of these writers were really good at the whisper, writing essays about the mundane or their family’s history, but not tying that mundane to larger political proclamations. We believe that artfulness and proclamations run counter to each other, but last week the students were just proclaiming huge things. The wonder of a proclamation is that if it’s big enough and bold enough, people are going to push back.

That’s the wonder of a proclamation, and that’s the usefulness of it. When the students started telling the rest of the class emphatically what they thought or believed about these big things, the proclamations just started gushing out. And then the person who makes a proclamation at the beginning of class will by the end of class come back with something completely antithetical to what they said, but that’s the point—you want to revise big thoughts and see how we can craft them into specific, sharp, big thoughts.

**It definitely goes against the old “show don’t tell” maxim.** You tell a lot by what you refuse to show, and you show a lot about what you definitely refuse to tell.

**You were talking before about the politics of audience, and we know you’ve written a lot for the Internet. Can you say something about the incredibly large topic of the Essay and the Internet?**

I think the Internet thankfully destroyed lots of suppositions about the essay. Black women and black people, specifically, have not just taken to the Internet but taken to the essay in ways you could not do before. For me personally, I have little to no desire to write to what people would call a “heteronormative white male gaze,” but before the Internet, I had to. After the Internet, different kinds of people could show their appreciation for my essays in the form of likes or retweets or clicks. Then multinational

I don’t know where the essay is going because I can’t imagine the next thing people are going to care about.

—Kiese Laymon

corporations, in the form of publishing companies, now come to me and say “we want to publish you.” And they want to publish me not just because they see the art is good but because they see there’s an audience for it. Before that, you didn’t write an essay for whatever magazine with the thought that tons of black folks, tons of queer folks, were going to be engaging with it. I know essayists now who write directly to that very rich audience of folk. That has expanded the essay, it has expanded the audience for the essays, and ultimately, it’s made the art more elastic. There’s lots of critique of Internet writing, but there’s no doubt it broadens who writes and who reads. Some of what I try to do is just push back against my students’ desire to see Internet writing as less than. The wonderful thing about the Internet is that you can find an audience, you can find a reader. And as a reader, you can find a writer. It was a lot harder when there was a lot less places to distribute, now you can distribute on your own. Every now and then, I read great essays on Facebook, on Twitter, or on some blog.

**Thinking about the Facebook essay, or how the digital might give rise to new forms—where do you think the essay is going?** The wonderful thing is I have no clue where the essay is going. That’s what I think is so corny is when people talk about the death of the essay. Yes, there were a lot of websites that were committed to personal essays that have gone under. It’s like hip hop, people are always talking about the death of hip hop, but if you can write a personal essay about the death of the essay then something tells me that the personal essay might not be going away. Why? Because people will always have an interest in exploring, if you write that exploration with care and soulness and love. If readers cannot just learn something new but feel and see something new. But I do think because we inundated with more and more personal essays, if you want to be interesting you have to make formal changes.

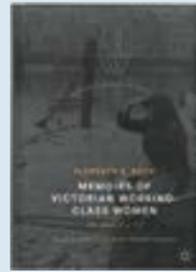
The thing about the essay is that, for better or maybe worse, it’s so attached to other specific cultural productions on the Internet. There’s always going to be a need for personal essays because we as humans are going to continue to consume cultural product on the Internet—and literally cultural product mean that stupid stuff Donald Trump is saying, whoever becomes the Democratic candidate, whatever weird-ass car comes out next week, whatever joke, whatever movie. There’s always going to be personal essays that respond to these things unless we stop being enamored with stupid stuff. But what would ever make that happen? I don’t know where the essay is going because I can’t imagine the next thing that people are going to care about, but I know that thing is going to have all these personal essays wrapped around it. If you could put stock in it, I would buy into the personal essay.

**It’s like with anything fun, people just want to say that it’s dying, on the verge of collapse. It’s just a sign that it’s fun.** I think that’s true. I listen to a whole lot of hip hop, I teach hip hop courses, and people said hip hop was dying literally when it stopped being this art form that was created in parks and people tried to concretize it and put it on tapes. People were like, “It’s dead.” Why? Because it’s not live anymore, you can pass it along. And same with the personal essay, it’s not dead.

**Tell us about your new books coming out.**

The first book is a memoir called *Heavy*. I started writing it a while ago, and when I finished that version of it, it was a book about my family and their relationship to food, weight, and sexual violence. But in revising it, I thought it was in some ways too clean. It was my mother and grandmother primarily talking to me about their relationships, and I didn’t talk back much. I thought about the dishonesty in that, so the version the world is going to see is my writing back to them about the language I often use to evade my relationships to sexual violence, food, weight, different kinds of trauma. And also different kinds of cultural celebration. It’s written to my mother, and it’s just a tough book. I hope it’s the hardest thing I’ll ever write. My other book, *And so on*, is an Afrosurrealist exploration of these five black folks who change the world. ♡

# Recent Books by Faculty



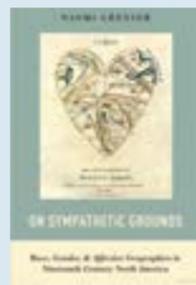
**Florence S. Boos**

*Victorian Working-Class Women's Memoirs: The Hard Way Up*

(Palgrave-Macmillan, 2017)

This volume is the first to identify a significant body of life narratives by working-class women and to demonstrate their inherent literary significance. Placing each memoir within its generic, historical, and biographical context, this book traces the shifts

in such writings over time, examines the circumstances which enabled working-class women authors to publish their life stories, and places these memoirs within a wider autobiographical tradition.



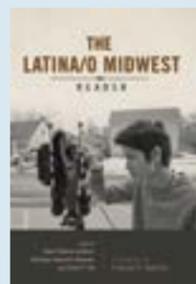
**Naomi Greyser**

*On Sympathetic Grounds: Race, Gender, and Affective Geographies in Nineteenth-Century North America*

(Oxford University Press, 2018)

*On Sympathetic Grounds* offers a new interpretation of the sentimental by mapping its grounds in North America. During sweeping transformations of territory, land stewardship, personhood, and citizenship

in the nineteenth century, sentimentalists evoked sympathy to express a desire for a place that was both territorial and emotional—what Greyser calls an “affective geography.” Ultimately, *On Sympathetic Grounds* uncovers a moving, non-linear cartography of sympathy’s vital place in shaping North America.



**Claire F. Fox,**

**Omar Valerio-Jiménez, and Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez, eds.**

*The Latina/o Midwest Reader*

(University of Illinois Press, 2017)

From 2000 to 2010, the Latino population increased by more than 73 percent across eight midwestern states. These interdisciplinary essays explore issues of history, education, literature, art, and politics defining today’s Latina/o Midwest. Eye-opening and provocative, *The Latina/o Midwest Reader* rewrites the conventional wisdom on today’s Latina/o community and how it faces challenges—and thrives—in the heartland.



**David Wittenberg and**

**Michael Tavel Clarke, eds.**

*Scale in Literature and Culture*

(Palgrave Macmillan, 2017)

This collection emphasizes a cross-disciplinary approach to the problem of scale, with essays ranging in subject matter from literature to film, architecture, the plastic arts, philosophy, and scientific and political writing. Its contributors consider a variety of issues provoked by the sudden and pressing shifts in scale brought on by globalization and the era of the Anthropocene.



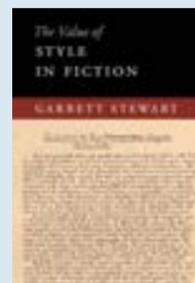
**Loren Glass**

*Rebel Publisher: Grove Press and the Revolution of the Word*

(Seven Stories Press, 2018; Paperback edition of *Counterculture Colophon* [2013], with a new Introduction.)

Grove Press and its house journal, *The Evergreen Review*, revolutionized the publishing industry and radicalized the reading habits of the “paperback generation.” In telling this story, *Rebel Publisher* offers a

new window onto the long 1960s, from 1951, when Barney Rosset purchased the fledgling press for \$3,000, to 1970, when the multimedia corporation into which he had built the company was crippled by a strike and feminist takeover. Loren Glass covers the full spectrum of Grove’s remarkable achievement as a communications center for the counterculture.



**Garrett Stewart**

*The Value of Style in Fiction*

(Cambridge University Press, 2018)

This is the first book to demonstrate the value of prose analysis—both appreciative and interpretative in its “evaluations”—across dozens of authors from Daniel Defoe through Jane Austen to Virginia Woolf, Charles Dickens and Herman Melville to Don DeLillo and Toni Morrison. *The Value of Style in Fiction*

is designed not just for students and scholars of the English novel—and its verbal “microplots”—but also for anyone interested in mastering the art of the sentence by “writing along with” its finest exemplars in a fully descriptive account: a stylistic challenge in its own right, exemplified by Stewart’s multifaceted critical modeling.



**Florence S. Boos, ed.**

*William Morris's Socialist Diary, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*

(Five Leaves, 2018)

William Morris was the most prominent artist and writer to embrace the new socialist movement of the 1880s. The diary, written in 1887 at the midpoint of his most vigorous political activity, is one of the most accessible introductions to Morris’s socialist efforts, as he records grim economic conditions, the hostility of the newspapers and police, internal socialist debates, and practical obstacles to his efforts at propaganda. This new edition contains updated annotations and expanded biographical accounts of persons mentioned in the diary.

# Departures

**Kevin Kopelson**, who joined the English Department in 1992, has retired after over two decades of outstanding teaching and research. Kopelson’s areas of expertise include critical theory, cultural studies, queer theory, and twentieth-century literature. In addition to numerous articles and reviews, he is the author of books including *Adorno and the Showgirl, Or Late Style; Confessions of a Plagiarist: And Other Tales from School; Sedaris; Neatness Counts: Essays on the Writer's Desk; The Queer Afterlife of Vaslav Nijinsky; Beethoven's Kiss: Pianism, Perversion, and the Mastery of Desire; and Love's Litany: The Writing of Modern Homoerotics*. “I am thankful that I found my passion for literary theory prior to Professor Kopelson’s retirement,” says UI student Willow Miller. “Last semester, I took his class on the subject and I received an invaluable introduction to a cryptic field of study.” In the words of English PhD candidate Rachel Walerstein, “Kevin was assigned to be my faculty mentor when I entered the doctoral program. For the last six years he has shown me what it means to be a generous as well as rigorous critic and writer, and how to continue to find joy in the process.”

The English Department bids farewell to adjunct lecturer **Mark Isham**, who taught business writing, technical writing, and team writing. He also taught courses in cartooning, appearing on Iowa Public Radio to talk about how to help students tap into deep learning by creating cartoons and comic strips. UI student Beatrice Rodriguez happily remembers visiting Isham during his office hours at Prairie Lights Bookstore. “We always sat by the bay windows on the second floor facing the street,” she recalls. In the classroom, Isham communicated to students from all disciplines the enduring importance of good writing. “I think he showed engineering and business students how valuable and difficult good writing is,” says Rodriguez. She adds, “This made English majors feel a little better since we are asked all the time, ‘What are you going to do with an English major?’”

The Department bids a warm farewell to **Lena** and **Michael Hill**, who joined the UI English and African American Studies faculty in 2006. The Hills have pursued new career opportunities at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, where Lena Hill is Dean of the College, and Michael Hill is Professor of Africana Studies. In 2016, Lena Hill accepted a position as Senior Associate to the President at UI, and more recently, she served as the University’s Interim Chief Diversity Officer. Michael Hill recently served as chair of African American Studies, and he held numerous other leadership positions on campus and beyond. The Hills’s important contributions to the University of Iowa and Iowa City community through their leadership, teaching, research, and service were celebrated in spring 2018 with a public reception and performance of *Cross-Examined*, a short play by Margot Connelly based on research by Professor Leslie Schwalm (History/Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies) that told the story of two African American mothers who successfully fought school segregation in Keokuk, Iowa in 1874. ♡

*Out of Iowa*, FALL 2018

# Faculty Highlights 2017–18

**Jennifer Buckley** won the Collegiate Teaching Award for her outstanding work with students, in and out of the classroom. Awardees are recognized by their peers for stimulating and satisfying students’ desire to learn, developing innovative and effective methods of presenting the most current and exciting knowledge in their disciplines, and fostering productive and generous mentoring relationships with individual students.

**John D’Agata** received the Distinguished Achievement in Arts and Humanities Award from the UI Office of Research and Career Development for his distinguished achievement in humanities scholarship and work in the creative, visual, and performing arts.

The University of Iowa College of Liberal Arts and Sciences named **Kathy Lavezzo** as a Collegiate Scholar, an honor that recognizes faculty excellence as evidenced in their scholarly record at the time of their candidacy for promotion to the rank of full professor.

**Inara Verzemnieks** (NWP MFA 2013), Assistant Professor of Nonfiction Writing, received the 2018 Early Scholar Career Award from the UI Office of Research and Career Development. She also received the Anšlav Eglitis and Veronika Janelsina Literary Prize for her memoir, *Among the Living and the Dead*.

**Jonathan Wilcox** was named a Collegiate Fellow, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences’s highest honor for faculty, in recognition of his distinguished record of teaching, research, and service.

# Graduate Honors 2017–18

**Micah Fields** (NWP MFA 2018) was named this year’s recipient of the Oxford American Jeff Baskin Writers Fellowship.

**Kate Nesbit** received the Huntington Library’s Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship to support the completion of her dissertation on listening to reading aloud and the novel in nineteenth-century Britain.

**Marija Reiff** has accepted a position as an assistant professor of nineteenth-century English Literature at the American University of Sharjah.

**Margaret Sheppard** was a visiting artist at Ringling College of Art + Design, where she gave a series of papermaking workshops and an artist’s talk. Her works and ephemera from Peace Paper Project’s living archive at Yale were exhibited at Ringling this February-March. Margaret currently has work exhibited in *Paper/Print: American Hand Papermaking, 1960s to Today*, which was on view at the International Print Center New York.

**Mariah Spencer** was accepted to the Folger Shakespeare Institute in Washington, DC for a week-long skills course titled “Introduction to English Paleography.”

**Stephanie Tsank** received the Woodress Scholar Research Grant, which will allow her to spend a month this upcoming summer in the Willa Cather Archives at the University of Nebraska.

#### A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

both UI Beineke Scholarships to date—make that three—as we are joined this fall by first-year Nonfiction Writing MFA student EmmaJean Holley, who also received this prestigious award.

In other graduate programs news, the top-ranked MFA in Nonfiction Writing Program continues to chronicle accolades for its graduates, including Micah Fields, recipient of this year’s Oxford American Jeff Baskin Writers Fellowship. And in our nationally ranked PhD program, English doctoral student Kate Nesbit received the Huntington Library’s Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship in support of her dissertation on nineteenth-century British literature.

Meanwhile, English faculty continue to embark on exciting new projects. To name a few high points of this past year, both Professor Lori Branch and Professor Garrett Stewart undertook teaching and lecture tours in China, and additionally, Professor Stewart taught and lectured in Italy, Switzerland, and Australia. I am especially gratified by accomplishments of junior faculty, who represent the future of the English Department. In recognition of her acclaimed memoir, *Among the Living and the Dead* (Norton, 2017), Assistant Professor of Nonfiction Writing Inara Verzemnieks received the Early Career Scholar of the Year award from UI and the Anšlavs Eglītis & Veronika Janelšina Literary Prize in Latvia,

the highest literary honor in that nation. For her excellence in the classroom Professor Jennifer Buckley received the Collegiate Teaching Award and a major grant to co-organize an Obermann Humanities symposium at UI titled “What Can the Museum Become?”

A couple of literary milestones speak especially to us lovers of literature this year: the two hundredth anniversary of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* is inspiring a host of events this fall, including panels for the Iowa City Book Festival featuring Professors Eric Gidal, Blaine Greteman, and Corey Creekmur. And Professor Ed Folsom is preparing for a busy year as a key participant in global celebrations in honor of the two-hundred-year anniversary of Walt Whitman’s birth.

I look forward to sharing news of these and other events involving English Department faculty and students in next year’s *Out of Iowa*. We value tremendously our connections to alumni, colleagues, and friends. I would love to hear from you, and I thank you for your ongoing support of the Department.

Yours sincerely,  
Claire F. Fox  
Professor and Chair of English