

## Reading Matters

*Vol. 16, Issue 4, October 28, 2010*

### **From (the Edge of) the Chair's Seat**

The buzz you may have heard in EPB of late and those sign-ups sheets you may have noticed taped to the 308 reception-area countertops point to the big event of the season: NonfictionNow. Next week will welcome some of the best writers of creative nonfiction not already on campus to the third Bedell Nonfiction Conference, November 4-6, 2010. Among the 400 or so writers, teachers, and students gathering this year will be former MFA and PhD students, visiting faculty from years past, and of course many outstanding practitioners of the art of the essay. Panels and readings will highlight the myriad forms of nonfiction from the video essay, documentary, and graphic essay to the memoir, lyric essay, and literary journalism. Readings by Rebecca Solnit, Alison Bechdel, and John Edgar Wideman are free and open to the public. For fuller details, see the conference [website](#).

To turn to more mundane news, next spring's curriculum is now up on ISIS, with thanks to Erin Hackathorn for overseeing its posting and to Elizabeth Curl for making sure our spring visitors all have contracts. In addition to the continuing visitors Katie Gubbels, Tom Keegan, and Deb Manion, along with CWT Fellows Matthew Null, Hannah Park, Mike Schorsch, and Cutter Wood, we will have one additional recent PhD teaching for us, Josh Raulerson, who will teach a Saturday and Evening 8G:001. We will also be joined by our Montpellier exchange professor, Anne-Marie Motard, teaching 008:085 Topics in British Culture and Identity and 008:110 Literature and Culture of 20th/21st-Century Britain. The Nonfiction Writing Program will be hosting Alma Guillermoprieto for four weeks as a visiting professor; she will teach a graduate workshop and an undergraduate course. Travis Johnson will be this year's Seely Dissertation and Teaching Fellow, teaching 008:060 Selected Works of the Middle Ages, and Ann Pleiss-Morris will hold the Dietz Dissertation and Teaching Fellowship, teaching 008:150 Topics in Medieval/Renaissance Literature.

There will no doubt be additional traffic in EPB 308 in the coming month as the team of PhD students who staff the English Advising office, under the leadership of Lori Branch and Anne Stapleton, gears up to see the many undergraduates who will be seeking guidance as pre-registration begins on November 15.

As you know CLAS has set enrollment minimums of 16 students in undergraduate courses and 8 for graduate courses ([policy here](#)). Bluford Adams and I will be monitoring enrollments carefully, and Erin will be raising caps gradually, in an attempt to make sure that all of our courses meet the required minimums.

The good news is that we enter the registration period with a surge of new majors: we now have 988 majors (1st & 2nd) plus 122 minors. That's surely cause for modest celebration, since it nicely reverses the decline we saw last year.

In other undergraduate news, the provost's office continues to emphasize Outcomes Assessment, and we are being asked, now that we have gathered data from faculty and graduating seniors, to do something with it. I will be inviting Wayne Jacobson, Associate Director of Outcomes Assessment, to a faculty meeting in early spring, so that he can explain some of our options as well as the university's expectations. You can read more about the university's goals for assessment [here](#). If you are interested in a broader view of the topic, a recent issue of *Inside Higher Ed* contains an essay by someone who made a career of assessment, now looking back on it, with a somewhat mixed report on what it has to offer.

The upcoming weeks will bring changes to the main office, in response to the College's plan to restructure the support staff in EPB. Gayle Sand has been promoted to the position of business manager of the departments in EPB (English, Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Linguistics), and will be working with all of the DEOs in the building. Erin Hackathorn is being promoted to administrative assistant, and will be taking on some of Gayle's duties. Sandy Mast, formerly from Rhetoric, will be the accountant for the whole building, and will be doing behind-the-scenes reconciling of accounts usually done by Gayle. In recognition of the challenges the reorganization poses for EPB departments, the College has authorized a search for a new administrative assistant for Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Linguistics, while English will be able to hire another full-time staff member, to fill the receptionist position Erin left last year when she took over Sharry's position.

And, last in the list of recent developments as well as incontrovertible proof that the semester is marching forward, the heating in EPB came on yesterday, not a day too soon to counter this blustery weather. Stay warm and work well.

### **Publications, Presentations, and other Faculty Matters**

**Patricia Foster's** essay "Sick of Smart" was chosen as a Notable Essay for 2009 by Robert Atwan in *Best American Essays*.

**Claire Fox** was featured in the October 13 issue of *FYI*. The interview can be found [here](#).

**Eric Gidal's** article "Melancholy, Trauma, and National Character: Mme de Staël's *Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution française*" has just been published in the Summer 2010 issue of *Studies in Romanticism*.

**Jeff Porter's** essay, "The Web's Random Logic," appears in the Autumn 2010 issue of [\*The Wilson Quarterly\*](#).

**Teresa Mangum** was also featured in a recent issue of *FYI*. Click [here](#) to read more.

### Journal Matters

The fall issue of *PQ* hits the streets in November, with essays on African American Intellectuals and the Antinuclear Agenda, the Poetic Spaces of Welsh Retirement, and Smollett in Harrogate, among others.



*Philological Quarterly* announces the Hardin Craig Prize

“People in general think that philology is at an end—while I believe that it has not yet begun” —Nietzsche

Beginning with volume 89 (2010), *PQ* will award the Hardin Craig Prize to the author of the best essay published annually in the journal. Named after *PQ's* founding editor, the prize honors Hardin Craig (1875–1968), who taught Shakespeare and English drama at the University of Iowa between 1919 and 1928. A cash award of \$1,000 will go to the article, in any area of literary study, published by a contributor (excluding current students or faculty at the University of Iowa) that best has advanced scholarship in its field. Although *PQ* long ago abandoned “philology” in the sense that Craig and his contemporaries used it, we hope that the selected essay might mark a contribution to the network of fields recently described by terms such as “post-,” “cultural,” or “future” philology. We take to heart Edward Said’s characterization of philological reading in “The Return to Philology” as a technique for “getting inside the process of language already going on in words and making it disclose what may be hidden or incomplete or masked or distorted in any text we may have before us.” The essay is selected by *PQ's* editorial advisory board with the advice of consultants as required.



The Fall 2010 issue of *The Iowa Review* has been published. Information about the issue can be found [here](#).

### Undergraduate Funding Matters

The Dewey Stuit Fund in Liberal Arts and Sciences is an endowed fund created by friends and former colleagues of the late Dean Stuit. Its purpose is to promote the

development of mentor-protégé relationships between undergraduate students and faculty members. Grants from the Dewey Stuit Fund may support undergraduate student travel, either to present their work or to advance their research or creative projects; equipment or supplies needed for an undergraduate research or creative project; departmental prizes for undergraduate research or creative efforts; or other mentoring activities such as faculty lunches or dinners with undergraduate students. The College wants to support projects in the Humanities & Fine Arts, the Social Sciences, and the Natural & Mathematical Sciences. Grants will be made to support travel, and to support students' research, scholarly, and/or creative projects or in support of departments' undergraduate mentoring activities. This year proposals should average \$200. Proposals may be made at any time and will be evaluated as they are received. For complete information, please visit the Dewey Stuit Fund website, [here](#).

### **Emeriti Matters**

**Carl Klaus**, emeritus professor of English and nonfiction writing, will be reading in Van Allen Hall, on Live from Prairie Lights, on Wednesday, November 3, 7:00 pm.

### **Internet Matters**

ITS is undertaking a project, instigated by the CIO and the Vice President for Strategic Communication, to make the services, programs, and activities offered by the University to the public via the Web fully accessible. A draft policy and timeline is being developed and will be circulated soon.

### **Facebook Matters**

The English Department is on Facebook! Go to <http://www.facebook.com/IowaEnglish> to become a "fan" of the Department.

### **Other Calendars**

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

### **Future Issues**

The next issue of Reading Matters will be on **Thursday, November 18**. Please send submissions for the next issue by 5 p.m. on **Wednesday, November 17** to [Erin Hackathorn](#).

