

Reading Matters

Vol. 16, Issue 6, December 9, 2010

From (the Edge of) the Chair's Seat

Well, sixteen weeks have certainly passed quickly. Classes are nearly finished, papers and books have been written, committees have been served on. The Digital Humanities search is nearing completion and an MLA short-list of candidates is being compiled. The reorganization of the staff in EPB is sorting itself out and advertising for our new receptionist is about to begin. The undergraduate English Society's "Pizza with Your Professor" series has been a resounding success, as was the first-ever "Welcome to the Major/Congratulations Seniors" reception organized by Barbara Eckstein and Lori Branch. Our graduate students have been diligently studying, teaching, writing, and (in some cases) putting together job applications and awaiting news of MLA interviews, the latter under the good guidance of the Placement Committee chaired by Teresa Mangum. And Jon Wilcox has spearheaded the drafting and submission to the dean of the self-study required for the departmental review.

Whew! That's a full slate of activities and certainly makes the upcoming winter break welcome. Many thanks to Miriam Gilbert for hosting the faculty reception tomorrow evening, with its chance to relax and reflect on the semester's achievements. Finals week is still to come, along with grading, and submission of evaluations for graduate classes, and then, for some of us, winter session courses and travel to the MLA convention in Los Angeles for interviewing, paper delivering, and professional meetings. Wherever the break takes you, I hope it proves relaxing and productive.

Spring term will bring campus visits (in January and February) for the finalists for the Digital Humanities search (a tentative schedule will be available soon) as well as visits from the external reviewers (in March, immediately following spring break). It will also bring a change in the faculty, with Susan Lohafer's retirement at the end of the year. This is Susan's last semester of teaching, but she will return in April for MFA thesis defenses and a reception celebrating her long and rich career in the department, especially the crucial role she has played in the Nonfiction Writing Program. That's one date I hope you will be sure to save.

For now, however, let me wish you success with the final tasks of the semester and a good start to the break.

Happy end of fall term!

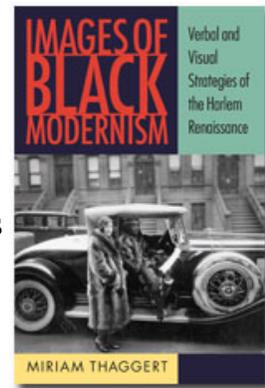
Publications, Presentations, and other Faculty Matters

On Thursday November, 18 **Mark Isham** appeared on a KRUI 89.7 FM program about memory. He talked to Emily Woodbury about using comics to encourage reflection and discussed his daily comic journal. Listeners can still download his comments [here](#).

Kathy Lavezzo (working with Heather Blurton, USC, and Hannah Johnson, U Pittsburgh) has been awarded an Obermann Center for Advanced Studies Interdisciplinary Research Grant for the project, "Rethinking Ritual Murder," for summer of 2011.

Garrett Stewart's book, *Novel Violence: A Narratography of Victorian Fiction*, has been chosen as the winner of this year's Barbara and George Perkins Prize (\$1,000), awarded by the International Society for the Study of Narrative.

Miriam Thaggert's book, *Images of Black Modernism: Verbal and Visual Strategies of the Harlem Renaissance*, has been published by the University of Massachusetts Press. The book uses literature and photography to examine "how multiple forms of the image (visual, verbal, and mental) organize and structure the valuations of race and how the visual constructions of blackness are articulated, reproduced, and guaranteed through the written word." A copy of the book has been placed in the collection of faculty publications in the Zimansky Reading Room.



Student Matters

The undergraduate English Society hosted Professor **Lena Hill**, in the "Pizza with Your Professor" series on November 30, with free pizza, pop and cookies. The last opportunity this semester for students to get to know a great professor outside a classroom setting was the session with Professor **Miriam Gilbert**, on December 7. We look forward to more of these sessions during the spring semester.

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, January 20**. Please send submissions for the next issue by 5 p.m. on **Wednesday, January 19** to [Erin Hackathorn](#).