

Reading Matters

Vol. 16, Issue 7, January 20, 2011

From (the Edge of) the Chair's Seat

Welcome to the first week of the spring semester! Classes are up and running and EPB's hallways have in the space of twenty-four hours gone from dark and empty to . . . well, still dark (no new building for us in this season's gift box, alas), but now bustling and full of the anticipation of a new semester.

The first and most exciting event this spring is the round of campus visits for the Digital Humanities cluster hire. The search committee (represented by **Mary Lou Emery, Claire Fox, Jeff Porter, and Garrett Stewart**) interviewed a remarkably strong slate of candidates at the MLA conference in Los Angeles in early January and have invited three of the very best to present their work during the second and third weeks of the semester (see dates of talks on the calendar below). Claire and Mary Lou, as co-chairs of the search, are coordinating the visits and will announce details about the candidates as their visits approach.

Further exciting news is that the start of the semester brings two new honors to our faculty. It's a pleasure to let you know that **Jon Wilcox** has been named the John C. Gerber Professor of English and **Brooks Landon** has been appointed to the Herman J. and Eileen S. Schmidt Chair (see details below). Congratulations to Jon and Brooks on these appointments, which couldn't be more fully deserved and which add (if you'll allow me to boast for a moment) to the department's distinguished roster of named chairs.

Other business that will likely call for departmental attention this semester includes: deciding on a hiring request for next year, learning more about how to use our Outcomes Assessment data, strategizing ways to support faculty research despite diminishing resources, and welcoming the external reviewers who will visit in March as part of the department's self-study. Speaking of that last event, should you wish to consult it in preparation for the reviewers' visit, the official .pdf of the internal self study, which came in at a hefty 294 pages with appendices, is available in the shared L: drive in the Department Review folder. On a more mundane note, see the calendar below for the dates I have reserved for likely department meetings on these and other matters. As always, if there is something else you would like us to discuss as a department or have the Executive Committee take up, please let me know.

I want to welcome back our Visiting Assistant Professors (**Katie Gubbels, Tom Keegan, and Deb Manion**), along with our Creative Writing Fellows (**Mathew**

Null, Hannah Park, Michael Schorsch, and Cutter Wood). They are being joined by this year's Seely and Dietz Fellows, **Travis Johnson** and **Ann Pleiss-Morris**, who will be teaching courses in medieval and early modern literature. In other faculty reshufflings, **Jeff Porter** will be in southern France this semester, participating in our exchange with the Université Paul-Valéry, while his counterpart, **Anne-Marie Motard** is our visitor from Montpellier for the spring.

Finally, my DEO hours for the semester will be M-F 1-5. You can schedule an appointment through **Erin Hackathorn** or just drop by if my door is open. And best wishes to all of you for a rewarding semester!

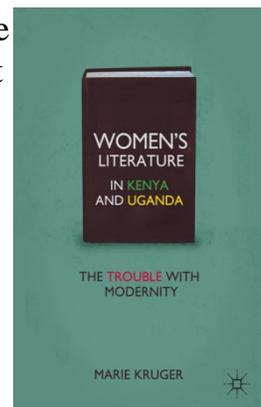
Publications, Presentations, and other Faculty Matters

David Dowling's book, *The Business of Literary Circles in Nineteenth-Century America*, has been published by Palgrave Macmillan as part of the Nineteenth Century Major Lives and Letters series. More information can be found [here](#).

Patricia Foster has an essay forthcoming in the fall issue of [New Ohio Review](#).

Claire Fox has been awarded a \$4,000 International Programs Curriculum Development Award to create a new course titled "Visual Culture and Performance in the Americas."

Mark Isham gave an all day Seminar in Workplace Writing on December 14, 2010 at Rockwell Collins in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The seminar included topics like basic writing tools, writing for different audiences, choosing the best medium, note-taking, conveying a difficult message, choosing an appropriate style, and strong sentences as a basic tool. The audience included engineers and marketing and human resources professionals. In line with his use of cartoons to encourage reflection, Mark now introduces his seminars using cartoons to outline basic writing concepts.



"A Winter's Tale: Celebrating the Bald Eagle's Return," **Blaine Greteman's** article on Iowa winters, bald eagles, Robert Hass and Shakespeare, was featured in January's issue of [Ode Magazine](#).

Marie Kruger's book, *Women's Literature in Kenya and Uganda: The Trouble with Modernity*, has been published by Palgrave Macmillan. More information can be found [here](#).

Stephen Kuusisto is currently a visiting scholar at the John and Mable Ringling museum in Sarasota, FL. He is researching the history of people with disabilities in the American circus. His new book of poems, *Letters to Borges* is scheduled for publication by Copper Canyon Press in the fall of 2012. He reports that the UI's new Disability Studies "certificate" program has been approved by the EDC

Brooks Landon has been appointed the first occupant of the newest endowed chair in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Herman J. and Eileen S. Schmidt Chair. The five-year, non-renewable award honors CLAS faculty for "excellence and sustained leadership in the education of undergraduates."

Jon Wilcox has been named the John C. Gerber Professor of English, a five-year appointment. Jon becomes the second holder of that title, succeeding **Dee Morris**, who was Gerber Professor from 2000-2010. The chair honors excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service.

Staff and Office Matters

You will see a new face at the receptionist's desk in EPB 308. **Peggy Timm** is joining us temporarily while we continue our search for a permanent staff member to fill that position. Peggy is on loan to us from CLAS, and has served as the Secretary III for the Asian and Slavic Languages and Literatures Department. We are fortunate to have someone so experienced to round out our team at the front desk; please stop by to welcome her in the coming weeks.

Our returning student employees, who will be working at the front desk this semester, are **Hannah Geilenfeld, Adam Segal, Brandi Nickelberry, Courtney Jensen,** and **Kaitlin Straits**.

Course Proposal Matters

The Crossing Borders (CB) program invites proposals from tenured or tenure-track faculty for CB graduate seminars to be offered for fall 2011, both semesters of 2012, and spring of 2013. CB seminars are unique in being regularly co-taught by two CLAS faculty members; both instructors are accounted by the College as making a full course effort. Contact **Erin Hackathorn** for a copy of the form with instructions for preparing and submitting proposals. Proposals must be accompanied by letters from DEOs indicating approval. Seminar proposals will be reviewed by the Crossing Borders executive committee. The deadline for submitting a proposal to DEOs is February 7.

Graduate Matters

Teresa Mangum reports that Placement efforts continue following MLA, as students receive invitations for on-campus visits and consider other job possibilities. Even in this year of greatly reduced academic employment, it is gratifying to see that our graduate students are finding their way to satisfying careers.

Nonfiction Matters

Robin Hemley and NWP MFA students have begun a new online journal, *Defunct Magazine*, which was profiled in [FYI](#).

Information about the Spring 2011 NWP readings can be found below. More details will be posted in the calendar as they become available.

Meghan Daum

Wednesday, February 9

7:00 pm Prairie Lights

(Master class for our students with Meghan on Thursday morning, Feb 10; details TBA)

Meghan is the author of an extraordinary essay collection, *My Misspent Youth*, plus a novel and a new memoir. She's also a weekly columnist for the *LA Times*. (A fascinating and horrifying recent 2-part [column](#) detailed her apparent near-death from Typhus.

Wayne Koestenbaum

Wednesday, March 2

7:00 pm (place TBA)

(Master class for our students with Wayne on Thursday morning, March 3; details TBA)

Wayne is the author of thirteen books, including five collections of poetry, a novel, an opera libretto, and six works of nonfiction, including his extraordinary meditation *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire*. He is Distinguished Professor of English at CUNY, where he teaches in the Graduate Center. His new forthcoming book is about Harpo Marx.

Joy Castro

Wednesday, March 23rd

7:00 p.m. (place TBA)

Joy Castro will be visiting the NWP the week of March 21st – 25th and will teach a four-day Master Class in Nonfiction as well as give a public reading and a talk to undergraduates interested in Nonfiction.

Joy Castro is the author of *The Truth Book*, (Arcade, 2005) and the forthcoming collection of essays, *Island of Bones* from The University of Nebraska Press, as well as a forthcoming edited volume, *Family Trouble: Memoirists on the Hazards and Rewards of Revealing Family*. Individual essays have appeared in *Indiana Review*, *Seneca Review*, *Fourth Genre*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and elsewhere. She's an Associate Professor of English and Ethnic Studies at The University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Margo Jefferson

Wednesday, April 13

7:00 pm (place TBA)

(Master class for our students with Margo on Thursday morning, April 14; details TBA)

Margo is the author of a recent book-length meditation entitled *On Michael Jackson*, as well as countless essays in journals such as *Grand Street*, *The Nation*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Village Voice*, *Ms.*, *Dance Ink*, and *Harper's*. From 1993 to 2008 she was critic-at-large for the *New York Times*, which earned her a Pulitzer Prize for criticism in 1995. She now teaches writing at the New School University and Columbia.

Jerald Walker

Friday, April 15th

7:00 pm (place TBA)

Jerald Walker will be visiting the NWP the week of April 11-15, and will teach a four-day Master Class in Nonfiction as well as give a public reading and a talk to undergraduates interested in Nonfiction.

Jerald Walker is the author of the acclaimed memoir, *Street Shadows: A Memoir of Race, Rebellion, and Redemption*, Random House, 2010, named by Kirkus Reviews as one of the best memoirs of the year. His work has twice appeared in *The Best American Essays* and also twice in *Best African American Essays*, as well as in such esteemed publications as *The Iowa Review*, *The Missouri Review*, *Mother Jones*, *The Oxford American*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *The Normal School*, and *The Harvard Review*. He is an Associate Professor of Creative Writing specializing in Nonfiction at Emerson College in Boston.

Newsletter Matters

The Winter 2010/11 departmental newsletter, *Out of Iowa*, has been published and can be found [here](#).

Undergraduate Matters

Graduating senior, **Dana Judas**, was [profiled](#) in the Daily Iowan on December 13, 2010

UICB Matters

The UI Center for the Book is honored to sponsor a talk by **Garrett Stewart** titled “Bookwork: Medium to Object to Concept to Art” on Friday February 4th at 4 pm in the Gerber Lounge. An illustrated discussion of the appropriated, altered, and installed books of recent Conceptual Art practice, Garrett’s talk anticipates his much-anticipated monograph on the subject.

“The Future of a Legacy: The UICB @ 25” is on exhibit in the North Lobby of the Main Library through February 19th. The exhibit displays the history and art of the UI Center for the Book’s first twenty-five years. The Center will host a closing reception on Friday, February 18th from 5.25-8.00, with docent tours, pechakucha, and food. Mark the date, all are welcome!

Library Matters

Services:

- Did you know you can now create links to full-text articles in library databases without having to go through Course Reserves? It is a simple process – here is a [link](#) to the instructions. Of course, you may continue to go through Course Reserves as usual – this is just another option for those who prefer DIY. Questions? Call 335-5912.
- Also, this is the usual time for Kathy to remind you that she is available for research consultations and course-related instruction. Please let your students know that they can contact her at any stage in their research projects.

Collections:

- The Center for Research Libraries will purchase nine microform sets through this year’s Purchase Proposal Program and these sets will soon be available through interlibrary loan. An annotated list of titles may be found [here](#).

- We have two new full-text newspaper databases that will be of interest to some of you. One is *The Times of India (1838-2001)* and the other is *The Guardian (1821-2003) and The Observer (1791-2003)* from Manchester, England. To locate them easily, just go to our [alphabetical list of databases](#).

Your liaisons from the UI Libraries to your department,
Marsha Forsy (collections) marsha-forsy@uiowa.edu
Kathy Magarrell (reference and instruction) kathy-magarrell@uiowa.edu

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, February 10**. Please send submissions for the next issue by 5 p.m. on **Wednesday, February 9** to [Erin Hackathorn](#).