

The English Channel

An open book lies on a wooden surface, with a stack of three smooth stones (one light, one dark, one brown) balanced on its spine. The book's pages are slightly curved, and the background is a soft-focus landscape of a field under a clear blue sky.

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Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

We're coming through a period of tremendous growth and renewal in the English Department, and the energy of our expansion has been supported with enthusiasm by new leadership in the College and University. In the past three years, we've grown popular and successful new programs, hired talented and committed new faculty, offered an unprecedented variety of extracurricular events and services, and reinforced our commitment to the core curriculum of literary studies by which we've always been known. As I prepare to complete my term as chair on August 15, I look back on our collective accomplishments with tremendous pride.

The Cinema Studies program has matured into a highly regarded major with an established interdisciplinary presence on campus; its newly launched [*Screen Culture Journal*](#) and ongoing film production opportunities foretell exciting modes of new growth and expansion. Creative Writing, though still in new program development, has established itself as a highly sought after major, offering a vibrant series of workshops, readings and craft talks to students and the public alike. Our Secondary Teacher Education Program has deepened its commitment to quality teacher training that is distinguished by exceptional subject area preparation in literary studies. The American Studies concentration has become more fully established in the Department curriculum as well, an academic presence that is complemented by its annual colloquium and student conference.

Perhaps our most impressive accomplishment is the continued growth and strength of our undergraduate and graduate English programs, traditional literary studies degrees that teach close reading skills and enhanced appreciation for language through the careful examination of literary texts. A core commitment to critical thinking and literary analysis has always been the hallmark of the Oakland English Department. This past year, we inaugurated a new speaker series to celebrate this vision, welcoming Shakespeare scholar Bruce Smith for a keynote address that was as scintillating as it was popular.

As we all know, moments of growth and fertility are often accompanied by hiccups of one sort or another, and we've found it a challenge to keep up our communications as consistently as we would have liked. We look forward to offering more regular English Channel newsletters and more consistent email, social media, and website communications. In the meantime, you always know where to find us! We're all happy to receive your emails, and visitors are always welcome on the first, third and fifth floors of O'Dowd Hall.

Kathleen Pfeiffer
Chair 2012-2015



Literary Gardens

Jennifer McQuillan's work has been published in *The Literary Encyclopedia*, *The Dictionary of Literary Biography*, and *Proteus: A Journal of Ideas*. She is the English Department Co-Chair of West Bloomfield High School, where she has taught since 1999. In 2013, she was honored as an Oakland County Teacher of the Year nominee.

"I loved my time at Oakland University! The intimacy of the classes in the grad program made all the difference for me and my writing. It deepened my knowledge of content and made me a better teacher. I cannot thank **Annie Gilson, Jeff Insko, Susan Hawkins, Kathy Pfeiffer, Brian Connery, and Brian Murphy** enough for all of their support and encouragement. I also had the pleasure of taking an online class in Winter 2015 with **Rachel Smydra** and learned so much about blogging and memoir—it was wonderful to be immersed in the OU community again."

Jennifer's experience as a Graduate Student at Oakland (MA 2006) has also played a part in her latest endeavor: a Literary Garden.



Jennifer McQuillan & Dr. Jane Eberwein

"My professors inspired me in a thousand ways, but I'm especially excited about my latest project. This year I have had the chance to marry my interests in American literature with gardening and blogging! I am creating a Literary Garden at West Bloomfield High School, working with museums, houses, and libraries to procure plants that are tied symbolically or biographically to the following authors: Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bronson and Louisa May Alcott, Mark Twain, Henry David Thoreau, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Kurt Vonnegut, and Ken Kesey."

Not only is Jennifer's Literary Garden making an impact on her students and local community, she is growing an audience of followers with her [blog](#) on the project and gaining national attention from media outlets like NPR, which aired a story on Jennifer ("[Authors' Garden Clippings Grow Students' Love Of Literature](#)") in August.

While she gains fame for sowing the seeds of a love for literature, Jennifer's biggest fans include her family—her husband, Ken McQuillan, our daughter, Emily (14), and their rescue beagle, Henry. And, of course, the faculty of the Oakland University English Department who appreciate and enjoyed her enthusiasm in their classrooms and are so happy to see her successes continue to bloom!

Alumni News

Publications:

Rhianna Marks, a recent OU graduate, has published [*The Miry Places Thereof...*](#)

The chapbook project started in a workshop with **Vanessa Stauffer**.

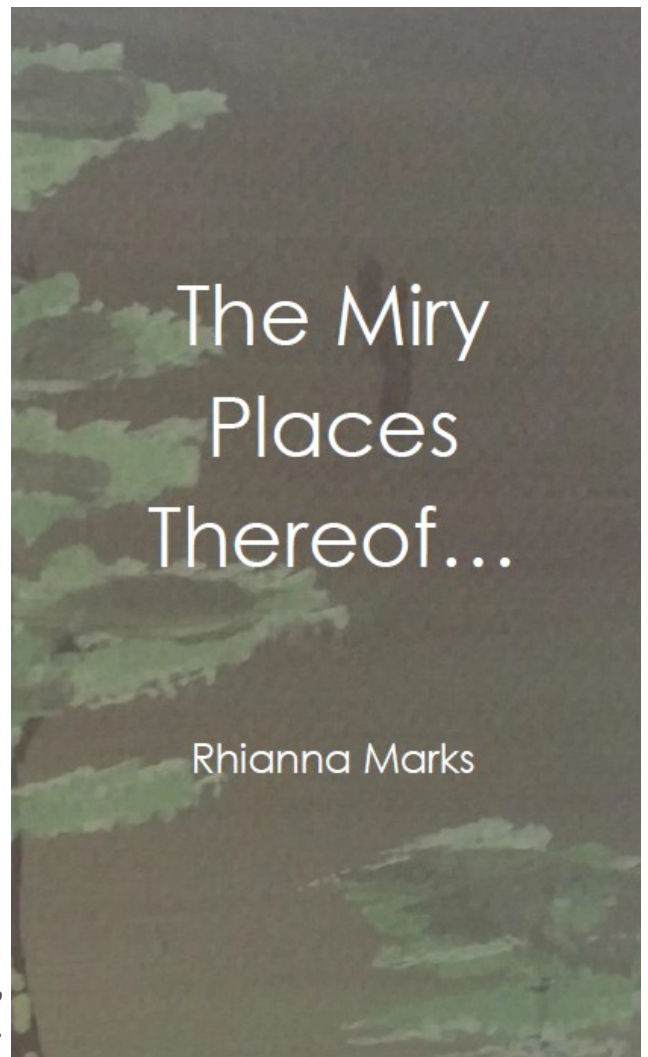
“A majority of the chapbook was produced in that course, where I was really trying to experiment with poetry for the first time. The chapbook began as a poetry experiment, but it turned into more of a search for personal identity. I explore topics of gender and religion, as well as personal history from childhood to genealogy.”

Rhianna graduated from Oakland University with majors in English (American Studies concentration) and Linguistics, and with a minor in Creative Writing.

The Roar in the Darkness

Something brought me awake from my dreams.
So I crawled into the shower, and after,
as the steam rolled out the window,
a sound, a distant roar, carried in from
out of the darkness, like a crowd’s hum
buried in with the bug rhymes --
I sat on the toilet, even as the steam
turned to chills, listening.
What lay out in the darkness beyond
apartments and houses, late-night dog
walkers, parked cars, cluttered garages, broken
patios, nestled in the stunted trees,
following the pot-holes and asphalt
by the garbage-filled shore, lit up by casinos
under the stars that can’t shine through
-- My eyes drifted shut as the last drops
of water evaporated. The scent of
soap dissipated. My dreams crept
back to me and the sound faded
as I sought the warmth of my bed.

Rhianna Marks,
from *The Miry Places Thereof...*



Department Events

On January 13th, the [Creative Writing](#) program hosted our colleague **Peter Markus**, who discussed his work with Inside Out Teaching. The event was held the Honors College Lecture Hall in Oak View Hall. Peter's recent work, "The Fish and the Not Fish," was [named a Michigan Notable Book](#).

On March 11th, the Creative Writing Program welcomed poets [Jamaal May](#) & [Tarfia Faizullah](#) in the Honors College Reading Room.



Sigma Tau Delta Presents
TO FOLLOW VIRTUE AND KNOWLEDGE:
OU AND ME
A talk by Professor Kevin Grimm

On March 11th, the Oakland University English Honors Society Chapter, Sigma Tau Delta, welcomed Professor **Kevin Grimm** for a talk entitled "To Follow Virtue and Knowledge: OU and Me." Grimm spoke on the OU school motto (*sequir virtute e canoscenza*), the origin of the verse, and its importance to OU students.

Save the Date

September 23rd: Poet, Memoirist and Essayist Reginald Dwayne Betts.

Betts's third book, [Bastards of the Reagan Era](#) will be released this fall (October 2015). "Reginald Dwayne Betts paid a heavy price for the wisdom coursing through his fierce, unstoppable book of poems, *Bastards of the Reagan Era*. The redemption he has found in wrestling, fearlessly, with the destructive decisions—and decade—of his generation's trials is mesmerizing and beautiful in the language and rhythms of his pen. Betts's journey back—from prison all the way to Yale Law School—is as inspiring as it is rare, and should give us pause in condemning any man to social death. From rebirth comes justice—and power," writes Henry Louis Gates, Jr.. Betts's *Shahid Reads His Own Palm* won the Beatrice Hawley Award. His memoir, *A Question of Freedom: A Memoir of Learning, Survival, and Coming of Age in Prison*, received the 2010 NAACP Image Award for nonfiction. He is a Yale Law student.

October 27th: Poet, memoirist and fiction writer Thomas Lynch.

Lynch is an internationally acclaimed local writer and friend of OU who has won many awards, including the American Book Award and the Great Lakes Book Award; he was also a finalist for the National Book Award. In addition to being an author, he is also an undertaker at his family's funeral home in Milford, MI. His book on death in contemporary America has received much acclaim; it is titled [The Good Funeral: Death, Grief, and the Community of Care](#).

Conferences



**ROOMS 128-130
OAKLAND CENTER
MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2015**

The [American Studies Concentration](#) is one of the oldest interdisciplinary programs at Oakland University. It provides both a broad understanding of the American experience and an introduction to the practice of focused interdisciplinary study. The concentration is taken in addition to a departmental major. By electing departmental courses with an American focus in two or three areas outside the major and framing the concentration with two interdisciplinary American studies courses, students may expect to gain a coherent sense of the national experience and appreciate the various contributions of different academic disciplines.

Coordinator of American Studies: **Jeffrey Insko**



Exhibitions

In December, Honors College students transformed Oak View Hall into a 'Gallery of the Gods' to showcase their artistic interpretations of Greek Myths for HC 202: Art & Literature: *Dialogues In, Dialogues On, And Dialogues Between Art, Artist, & Audience* taught by **Susan Lynne Beckwith**.

The Grand Opening of the exhibit was the grand finale to the students' studies of famous artistic interpretations (visual, verbal, and musical) of Greek Mythology.

To display their creative projects (which took form in many mediums: from pottery to watercolor, collage to original music compositions, rustic sculpture to digital media), students curated an incredible and well-attended campus-wide event, which included Greek-themed refreshments.



24-Hour Filmmaking

“There's No Place Like Homecoming”

Challenge

In the first ever **Golden Grizzly 24-Hour Film Challenge**, teams of OU students, alumni, and faculty members had 24 hours to create a short film (90 seconds to 3 minutes). Along with a popular OU landmark, the filmmakers were required to incorporate two props (given to them when they checked in) and two familiar famous movie quotes.

While everyone who participated had a great time completing the challenge, the winners of the challenge were the Larkin family. Shannon and Dave Larkin are both OU alums who registered for the Challenge in the hopes that it might be a fun project for their family and better acquaint their two daughters, McKenna (14) and Brooke (12), with the university.

When they arrived for event registration on Friday afternoon, it quickly

became apparent that 12-year old Brooke was a budding filmmaker. After a quick tutorial on the video and audio equipment, the family spent the rest of the day capturing footage from a variety of locations across campus and at several homecoming events. The props assigned to the Larkin family were a Cinema Studies mug and an electric tea kettle, and they were given the lines “There's no place like home” and “Go ahead, make my day.” Brooke, McKenna and Shannon spent most of Saturday at the editing lab, where Brooke edited the video footage into [“There's No Place Like Homecoming.”](#) a wonderful, fun and quite touching ode to OU and homecoming.

Congratulations to the Larkin family—our OU Alums and Future Students—on winning the School Spirit Award!



Student Clubs

British at Heart

Brittany Kelly, who won the OU Student Activities award for Outstanding Officer of a Student Organization at the CSA Student Activities and Leadership Awards, describes **The British at Heart Club** as “combining the academic and the fun, as we explore and celebrate a variety of topics relating to British literature, fandom, and culture—including *Doctor Who*, Shakespeare, Harry Potter, Sherlock Holmes, and Jane Austen. Our meetings generally include both a presentation from a guest speaker on the topic and some games and activities or a screening of an episode from the show.”

Their fliers invite engaged student and faculty participation with the following enticement: “Love British culture? Enjoy drinking tea? Want to meet other people who are a part of the same fandoms as you? Then join the British at Heart club at Oakland University and partake in its wickedly Britastic meetings.”

The British at Heart Club also took home University Awards for the “Most Creative Table Display at the Student Organization/Student Support Staff Networking Event” and the “Most Creative Flier” for the GrizzOrgs Olympics competition this past year.

Their Blind Date with a Book Fundraiser raised a grand total of \$129.08, \$65 of which was donated to the American Heart Association, while the rest will be saved for the Fall 2015 semester.



British at Heart

Kevin Grimm participated in two British at Heart events this past year.

“First, I joined a celebration of all things Harry Potter, at which I talked briefly about my own experience with the books, my ignorance of the movies, and what I would call the faux-medievalism of the books. I’m by no means an expert in Potterania, and felt that I had but small beer to share with the group. The students, however, were welcoming and interested and I very much enjoyed hearing their Potter perspectives.”

He also joined James Naus from the History Department to talk with the British-at-Hearters about Arthur and Merlin in the Middle Ages.

“We then watched the first episode of the [BBC Merlin](#). This was great fun. I very much enjoyed the interaction of an event that included a colleague from another discipline. Prof. Naus talked about the historical time period in which the Arthurian story is set (and from which it descends), while I talked about the medieval development in literature of the Merlin figure. *And* we received medieval knight action figures, which stand proudly on my desk as I type. I was unfamiliar with the BBC Merlin, though I had heard of it a good deal, and have since watched another episode and intend to continue.”

“I was sorry I had to miss the Tolkien and Lewis event (two of my favorite authors) and I certainly look forward to future group events.”

And if you are ‘British at Heart,’ you might enjoy employing the (in the words of The British at Heart Club) ‘Britastic’ slang found in [“8 British Expressions, Explained”](#)! No doubt you will also enjoy attending or supporting The British at Heart Club meetings. Who doesn’t love lively discussions over tea?!



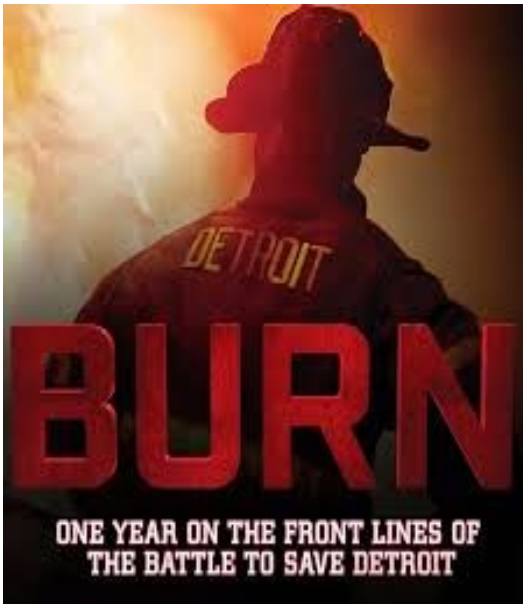
Events...

Events

Detroit Docs *Burn* Event

Organized and run by students in **Hunter Vaughan's** 'Film and Social Change' course, this year's Detroit Docs *Burn* Event series reflected the Cinema Studies program's ongoing ambition to become more involved with the Metro Detroit community.

The *Burn* event was a great example of active learning, service learning, and student success goals. It was organized and run by students in Professor Vaughan's course, which was developed through a CETL grant for innovative teaching methods and the event itself was partially funded by a CAS Student Success award aimed at combining community engagement with active student involvement. The event was a huge success and the guest speakers included Labor and Urban Studies Professors/Scholars, Detroit Firefighters, and the President of the Detroit Firefighters Association.



Cinema Studies

Secret Cinema

Events

The event is exactly what the name implies. A cinematic experience where the film to be screened that night is kept a secret from the audience until the opening sequence.

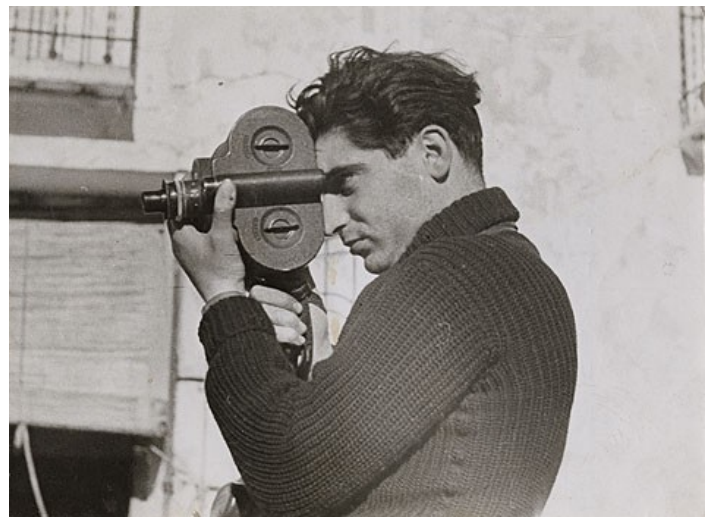
The era and genre changes from iconic film to film, but one thing remains the same—the [OU Cinema Studies](#) faculty get to share both their expertise *and* love of film with an audience that has an incredible evening of educational entertainment.

The well-attended events, which include a short introduction by a faculty member and a post-screening Q&A with moderators from Cinema Studies and the engaged audience, take place at [The Maple Theatre in West Bloomfield](#) on the first and third Thursday of each month (with the first screening being a pre-1967 ‘Old Hollywood’ film and the second screening featuring a ‘New Hollywood’—post 1967—film.

The **OU Cinema Studies Filmmakers-in-Residence 2015-2016** are [Benoit Decaillon](#) (Director, Cinematographer, VFX); [Julien Dacailon](#) (Director, Cinematographer, VFX); [Michael Manasseri](#) (Producer, Director, Actor).

How Well Do You Know Your Professors?

In this short film, [How Well Do You Know Your Professors?](#), OU Cinema Studies students Morgan Dean and Avery Udell interview OU [Cinema Studies](#) Professors **David Shaerf, Adam Gould, Hunter Vaughan, Courtney Brannon Donoghue, and Kyle Edwards**



Creative Writing

Why I Chose a Creative Writing Major

by Becca Reichenbach



My journey to becoming a member of OU's English community was not a traditional route, but it is perhaps relatable. I started OU in the fall of 2010 as a Psychology major, fully aware that my dream was to be a successful fiction novelist. That should have been my first clue, but I did not believe that I was good enough at analyzing literature to pursue an English degree. However, throughout sophomore year, I found myself scribbling out more story ideas in my notes than research methods, so I knew I needed a change. The day I found out that OU was implementing a major in creative writing, I went home and cried tears of joy (and then, of course, changed my major accordingly).

My first creative writing course was ENG 216, Introductory Workshop in Creative Writing, Fiction/Poetry, with Professor **Ed Hoepfner**. In that room, I found my people. Going to class suddenly meant more than hearing others critique my stories. It meant being surrounded by a community of writers that had the same frustrations as I did. This new found confidence aided me in all other aspects of my OU life—from running the Gay Straight Alliance to participating in the Student Activities Funding Board. I even received the opportunity to teach.

In the winter of 2013, I met Professor **Annie Gilson** at an English Department Internship Night. At this particular event, Annie expressed her desire to start working with the Baldwin Center in Pontiac. Over the next few months, another student and I helped Annie create the OU Creative Writing Program for Baldwin's summer camp and after school enrichment courses. We witnessed a girl who despised poetry end up loving it and watched boys eagerly write out their adventure-filled dreams. Helping the kids develop a deep appreciation and enthusiasm for writing was an unforgettable experience.

Continued on next page...

Why I Chose a Creative Writing Major *continued*

As I was heading into my last year at OU, Annie once again helped me get an internship in an area of the workforce I never thought I would enjoy—social marketing. A week after graduation, my internship at MSM turned into a full time job. The work I do in my position as social media manager and copywriter often parallels the process I use for fiction writing. The Facebook pages I administer allow me to develop online personalities, and the research I do for clients feels similar to that of developing stories. It is also nice that one of our main focuses as a company is on higher education and engaging alumni. (I am looking at you, Oakland University Alumni Association.)

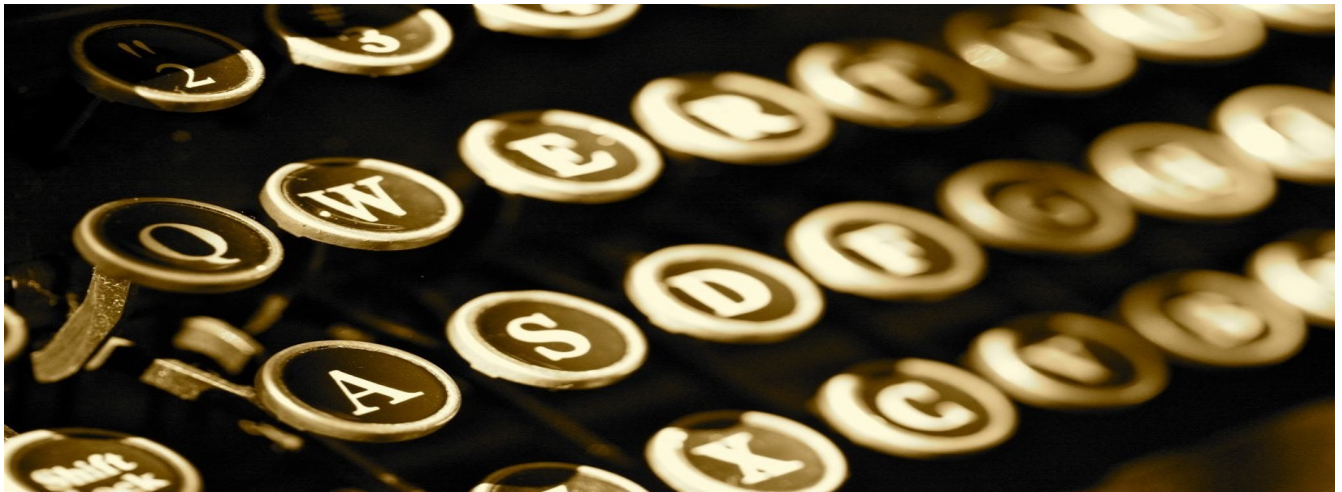
If there is one thing I have learned from my job at MSM, it is that professors are not lying to you when they say the world needs English majors. So many businesses would be nowhere without English majors coming up with copy material and editing their words. As for the rest of

my future, who knows what it will hold, but thanks to OU, I feel ready to take on anything (except taxes).

I have learned that you do not need to have the highest vocabulary in the world to be a good writer and an engaged student. You do not have to love Shakespeare or believe Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* is one of the best novels ever written to be accepted in the English department.

Experiment with your writing, embrace yourself as a critical reader, and explore the many opportunities waiting to be faced head on. There will never be another experience like your undergraduate career, so enjoy it as it is happening.

Becca Reichenbach graduated with a B.A. in Creative Writing from OU in 2015. She is currently writing a book about LGBTQ+ youth, watching Netflix nightly with her cat, and obsessing over fictional people.



Upcoming Events

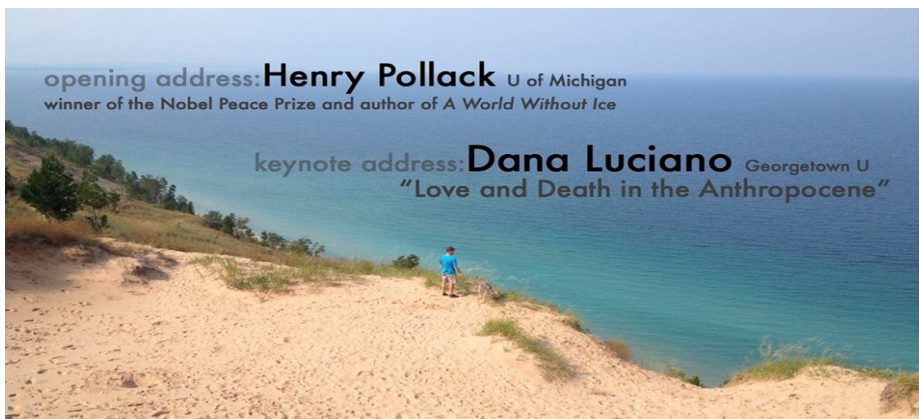
Climate Literacy:

Reading the Anthropocene

This one day symposium, sponsored by the [American Studies Concentration](#), will foster conversation about the local and regional implications of climate change, bringing together scholars, activists, scientists, and those who work on conservation and sustainability to help “read” the anthropocene—this new epoch defined by human activities’ impacts on the planet. The symposium will explore the “literacies” surrounding the issue of climate change and human effects upon global ecosystems and reflect the exciting directions the humanities are taking, while encouraging interdisciplinary conversation. Faculty from across the College of Arts and Sciences—English, American Studies, Cinema Studies, History, Biology, and Chemistry—will participate.

Participants will include representatives from local and regional conservations groups, environmental organizations, environmental justice workers, and grassroots activists in order to locate points of intersection between the work of environmental advocacy and the work of professional academics. Students will learn how scholarly investigation, in the humanities and beyond, addresses real-world problems— none more vital than climate change.

Nobel Peace Prize recipient Henry Pollack and Dana Luciano, Associate Professor and Director of Women's and Gender Studies at Georgetown University will both speak at the symposium.



**Thursday,
October 15,
9 a.m. - 7 p.m.**

Upcoming Events

Looking Forward

- Sep 18 **English Dept. Alumni Reunion**, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
- Sep 18-20 **Oakland University 2015 Fall Homecoming and Reunion Weekend, Golden Grizzly 24-Hour Filmmaking Challenge**
- Oct 07 **Applying to Graduate School: All Students**, 5-6:30 p.m.
- Oct 14 **Fiction Craft talk conducted by Nadia Bozak**, guest novelist and short story writer, 5-7 p.m.
- Oct 22 **Career Event/Job Fair for English and Creative Writing Majors**, 5-6:30 p.m.
- Oct 28 **Internship Open House for English & Creative Writing Majors**, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
- Nov 10 **Ed Haworth Hoepfner's Farewell Reading**, 5 p.m.
- Nov 12 **Cinema Studies Professionalization Workshop**, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
- Nov 18 **STEP DAY**, Informative day for students interested in majoring in STEP (Secondary Teacher Education Program) 1-3 p.m.
- Nov 18 **InsideOut Literary Arts Project**, a reading of poetry by Detroit public school students from their work, 5:30-7 p.m.
- Nov 23 **Read-In, *Don Juan***, by Byron, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
- Dec 1 **Lee Ehlers**, Guest talk, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Dec 2 **Sigma Tau Delta's faculty lecture by Professor Edward Haworth- Hoepfner**, 5-6:30 p.m.

Please contact the Oakland University English Department for all specific locations and event information

Studies Abroad

Winter Break In Ireland

By Tara Taylor

When I was completing my Master's degree in English, I enrolled in Dr. **Brian Connery's** Irish Literature course. My Irish heritage was what sparked my initial interest in the class. I was delighted to read the works of famous Irish authors such as Jonathan Swift, William Butler Yeats, and James Joyce – all while learning about the exciting, complex, and often-times turbulent history of the island.

While in the class, Brian announced that he was organizing a student trip to Ireland through the Oakland University International Education program and passed around a flyer. I immediately knew I wanted to go; however, I had never travelled that far before and thus I was a little nervous. Hesitation led to inaction, and I missed out on the trip. I graduated with my MA in English in 2011, but I regretted letting my fear stand in the way of visiting a place I had always dreamed of seeing. I vowed that if I ever had another opportunity, I wouldn't hesitate next time.

Years later, I finally got a second chance. Last year, Brian announced that he was coordinating “the last Irish jig” – his final student trip to Ireland. This time, I didn't hesitate. As soon as I was able, I put down a deposit and committed to the trip. As I've learned, doing the very thing that scares you often turns out to be one of the best things you could ever do.

My trip to Ireland was nothing short of an unforgettable experience. Over the course of our 10-day tour, we visited the metropolitan city of Dublin, retro Sligo, musically-rich Doolin, and young, energetic Galway. As we drove through the country and took in the vibrant green landscape, the raggedy sheep, the sea and the rivers, the ancient ruins of castles and grand estates of Ireland's elite, and the friendly Irish people who welcome you in every pub...I felt I was witnessing the history and culture that I had learned about in my Irish Literature class coming to life in front of my very eyes.

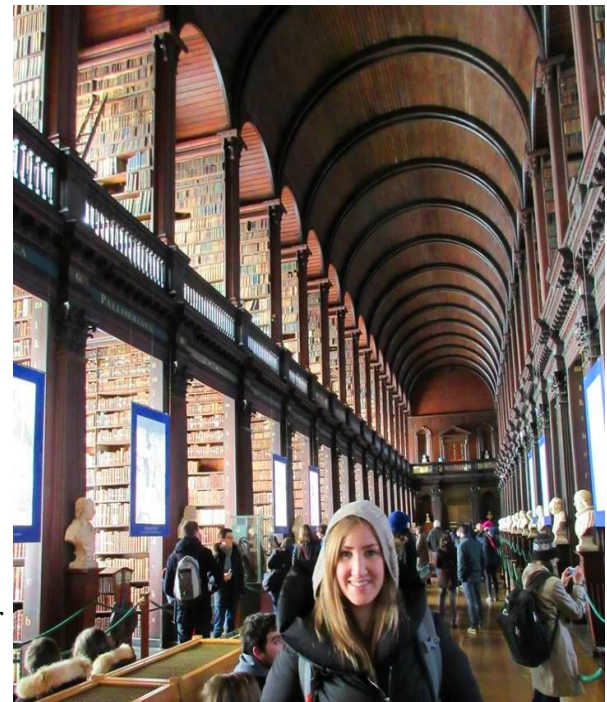
Studies Abroad

Winter Break in Ireland *continued*

In Dublin, we walked the grounds of Trinity College, and were regaled with tales of how Bram Stoker, Oscar Wilde, and Jonathan Swift spent their days attending college there. Also while in Dublin, we were treated to a hilarious rendition of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Abbey Theatre, a 101-year-old theatre where many notable Irish playwrights had their work performed throughout the past century. We also went on a "literary pub crawl," visiting the very places where writers like James Joyce enjoyed a drink or two. The guides also showed us the exact places that inspired specific scenes in Joyce's *Ulysses*; you could picture the characters acting out the story in front of you! As we travelled Yeats country (around Sligo), I could see why the romantic poet was so inspired to capture the country's beauty and spirit in his poetry. As our eyes feasted on the scenery, Brian read several of Yeats poems to us, transporting into Yeats's world. We also stopped by Yeats's actual grave, paying our respect to his legacy. In Doolin, the whole group enjoyed a night out in the town pub, watching a band play traditional Irish music. As I watched the band perform, I felt a connection and a reverence for music that so many Irish authors describe as the heartbeat of the nation's culture and history. Finally in Galway, I was inspired to see the melting pot of young students, writers, and visitors who might be the next piece of Ireland's literary history.

I could go on for days about how my journey to Ireland filled up my heart with joy and awe. The spirit of this place is truly special. There's something truly enriching and inspiring about being able to actually see and touch the places you once only learned about in a book. I am eternally grateful to Brian and to Oakland University's International Education program for making this life-changing experience possible for an alumna like me.

Tara Taylor (pictured at left in the Trinity College Library) graduated with a Bachelor's in English in 2009, and a Master's in English with departmental honors in 2011. Currently, she teaches English and Communication courses at Baker College and Oakland Community College.



Studies Abroad

Winter Break In Ireland

By Brian Connery

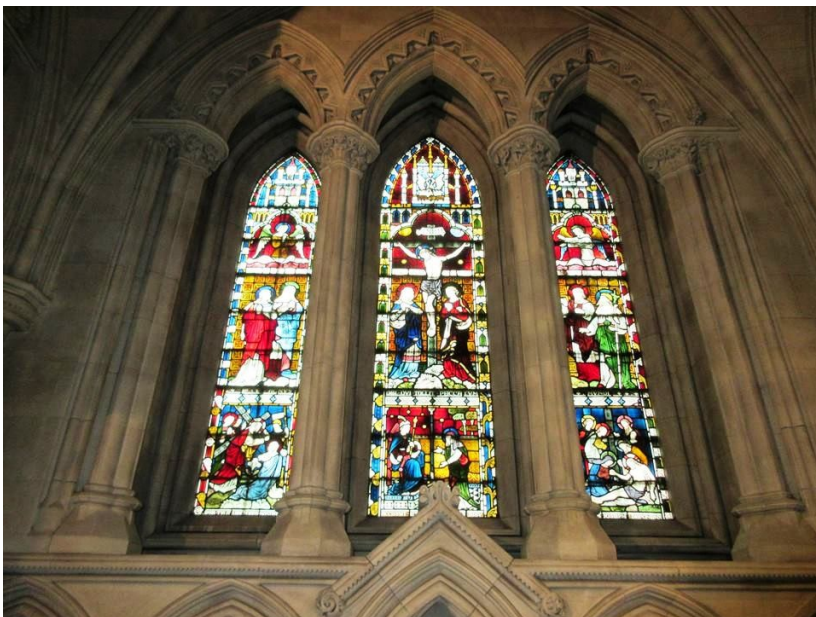
Twenty-one students, including many from the ENG 343 course in Irish literature, along with **Cinema Studies** lecturer **Charlie Meyers**, participated this past February in the fourth Winter Break in Ireland Program, organized by Professor **Brian Connery**.

Still somewhat dazed from their red-eye flight (or “gob-smacked” as the locals would say), participants on the first day enjoyed a tour of Trinity College and the Book of Kells, followed by a visit to Marsh’s Library. Based in Dublin for the next three days, the following morning they were guided by a local labor historian on a tour of Dublin and spent time at the National Museum (golden brooches and bog people) before an afternoon excursion

to Glendalough in the Wicklow Mountains, the site of St. Kevin’s sixth-century monastic settlement. The evening was spent on a literary pub crawl, organized by a pair of actors who performed scenes of plays, recited poems, and regaled the group with anecdotes about Dublin writers and the pubs they frequented.

Subsequent days included an archeologist-led day trip to the Boyne Valley to tour Newgrange, a magnificent Paleolithic passage tomb; the Hill of Tara, with the crowning stone for the High King of Ireland; the celtic crosses at Monasterboice; and Mellifont Abbey, the first Cistercian monastery in Ireland, founded in the 12th century. Day Four returned to literary

matters, with a visit to the Yeats exhibit at the National Library and a talk on Irish drama by Helen Means, a Trinity College lecturer and *Irish Times* drama critic, before attending a brilliantly inventive production of *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (set in a retirement home, with a conflict created by adult children who opposed their parents’ wishes to marry) at the world famous Abbey Theatre.



Studies Abroad

Winter Break in Ireland *continued*

From Dublin, the group headed west, with a stop at Rathcroghan, site of the climactic action in the Irish epic *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, and a visit to the Tobernault Holy Well before a night in Sligo. The next morning began with a tour of Yeats country and of Lissadell House, the childhood home of the Irish patriot Countess Markievicz, before traveling through the Burren, with stops at a fairy fort and a stone circle, to Doolin, on the coast of county Clare, for the first night of the Micho Russell Music Festival.

The group then traveled south to Galway, via the Cliffs of Moher. Reports of thirty-five mile per hour winds and heavy rains led Connery to cancel the scheduled ferry trip to Inis Mor, the largest of the Aran islands, and a day of bicycling there. The group cajoled our coach driver to take us instead for a morning's trek around Coole Park, the former estate of Lady Augusta Gregory, playwright, co-founder of the Abbey, and the center of a circle of Irish literary greats including Wilde and Shaw. After a free afternoon in the charming city of Galway, we had a farewell dinner, toasting the good people of Ireland and its splendid scenery and colorful history, and celebrating a successful program.

British Studies at Oxford Program

[The British Studies at Oxford Program](#) is designed to immerse students in the historical, cultural, and social milieu that has informed the ideas, events and works studied in our courses.

British Studies at Oxford will be offered Summer 2016 from July 3 to July 29.



Scholarships

Holzbock Award: \$3,800.50

Jonathon Phou (English Major)

**Mr. and Mrs. Roger Kyes Scholarship: \$2,000 each
(Scholarly Excellence)**

Hannah E. Sells (English Secondary Education Major)

Emma Spak (English Secondary Education Major)

**The Doris J. Dressler Scholarship: \$1,500 each
(Need and Scholarly Excellence)**

Jason Durina (English Major)

Kevin Marcaccio (Creative Writing Major)

Morgan Dean (Cinema Studies & Creative Writing Majors)

Alexander Norris (Creative Writing Major)

Eva L Otto Award: \$2,500 each

Christine Pellecchia (English Major)

Melissa Devereaux (English Major)

Stein Alpiner: \$500 each

Emily Kubo (English w Secondary Education Major)

Jason Durina (English Major)

Balabuch Study Abroad Award: \$1,000

No recipient(s) were named as the British Studies at Oxford Program was not held during the Summer 2015 semester.

**Mary K. Davis Writing Awards: \$715 each
(Payable to Bear River Writer's Camp)**

Rhianna Marks (English Major, Creative Writing Minor)

Felicia Krol (English Major)

Awards

Contests

Ekphrasis Poetry Contest Winners

Undergraduate Contest

First Place: Lindsay Olson, "Pulling Oranges"

Second Place: Yosef Raz, "Failure"

Third Place: Kellie Fullan, "The Bride Stripped Bare by
Her Bachelors, Even (the Large Glass)"

Graduate/Alumni Contest

First Place: Shayla Hawkins, "Butler's Magic"

Second Place: Devin D. Germain, "Sleeping Bears"

Third Place: Joy Gaines-Friedler, "Portrait of a Woman"

Flash Fiction Contest Winners

Undergraduate Contest

Lindsay Olson, "Disconnect"

Delaney Kamm, "The Wanderers"

Ambika Vohra, "The Ferris Wheel"

Graduate / Alumni Contest

Shannon Waite, "Personal Ad"

Terry Walper Hojnacki, "The Note"

Zan Giese, "The Psychic's Son"

Thank you to Tobby S. Stein (and Neal Alpiner) for the generous donation of \$1000 to be used for Scholarships to two students who have financial need.

If you would like to contribute to the scholarship and success of one of our deserving Undergraduate or Graduate Students, please contact the English Department at 248.370.2450. Donations of *all* amounts are appreciated as they assist our students in achieving success and attaining their goals.

Student Successes

English Department Students

Aspire to (and Achieve) More...

Jane Asher, former English Department Teaching Assistant, brilliantly defended her dissertation, entitled "*Undermining the Angelic Restrictions of First-Wave Feminism: What the New Woman DID, DIDN'T, and WOULDN'T DO,*" and was awarded a Ph.D. from Wayne State University.

Matt Bell, former Oakland University English major, got his first byline in the *New York Times*, with a [review of Margaret Atwood's newest collection in the Sunday Book Review](#).

Wilkie "Butch" Collins, Oakland University BA and MA, successfully defended his dissertation, "Chivalric *Lieux de Mémoire*: Nostalgia, Communal Memory, and the Burden of Historical Consciousness in Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*," and was awarded a Ph.D. from Wayne State University

Spencer Marentette, a graduate of the Creative Writing major, received the Alfred Wilson Award this year. Students compete university-wide for the Wilson Award, and Spencer's accomplishment is an excellent testament to the wonderful work of our Creative Writing faculty in mentoring our students on their journey to success.

Shaun Moore, an Oakland University with an English BA and MA, was recently appointed the Director of e-LIS at Oakland University.



The Journey...

Excerpts from Kevin Laam's

Address to Graduates

Congratulations! This is a time to celebrate. Don't *forget* to celebrate – don't get so swept up in the whirlwind of activity that comes with graduation that you forget to step back and soak in the moment. Milestones like this are few and far between. And please don't forget to thank your families and friends for supporting you through your academic journey.

Although I'm not sure "journey" is the correct metaphor to describe what graduation is meant to signify. The metaphor deserves to be unpacked—because we're English majors, that's what we do. On one hand, journey is a perfectly apt metaphor for college. You've journeyed a long, grueling distance, and now you've arrived at your destination. But as you know, graduation isn't just an end: it's also a beginning.

But does that mean when we graduate we retire our intellectual curiosity? Does it mean we cease to search for deeper meanings once we're outside the hallowed walls of the literature classroom? I'm reminded here of a play that most everyone in this room has seen or read, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Juliet blithely asks Romeo, "What's in a name?"—and she's not just being clever or flirty. She's questioning the very capacity of names, of *words*, to capture the full meaning and measure of all that they hope to signify. She's actually performing an exercise—a semiotic analysis—that every English major would be familiar with. She is recalling the wisdom that every English major knows by heart: that words should not be taken for granted, that the assumptions embedded into language need to be questioned.

I would hope that after you graduate, you are able to resist the pressure to become intellectually incurious. Make no mistake: most every force you encounter in the culture will try to dumb you down. You haven't come this far only to lay down your books, collect your paychecks, and be on your way. Now more than ever, as you venture beyond your libraries and classrooms, it is vital that you prove the value of literary studies—in your actions, and of course, in your words. Be a proud ambassador for the variety and possibility of language and literature. As English majors we're too often prone to self-deprecation, since society has become unprecedentedly hostile toward the humanities. This doesn't have to be.

The journey doesn't *end* here....

Begins (Not Ends) Here!

Okay, This is Long...

Faculty News

Courtney Brannon Donoghue's essay, "Sony and Local-Language Productions: Conglomerate Hollywood's Strategy of Flexible Localization for the Global Film Market," was published in *Cinema Journal*.

Kyle Edwards shared his Cinema Studies expertise about several issues of relevance to Sony and the film *The Interview* on *WWJ Newsradio 950AM*.

Andrea Eis reports that "a new film of mine, called *Parallax*, has been accepted as part of an international project called Another Athens, with screenings in Edinburgh, Scotland and Athens, Greece. *Parallax* is a short-form experimental art film that explores the overlapping perspectives and mental images that I have of Athens and Detroit."

Adam Gould reports, "The documentary film I edited, *Welcome to Unity*, screened last week at the Chicago International Children's Film

Festival. The film won the award for best documentary feature from both the adult jury and the kids jury. We are hopeful that this success will open the door to more festivals."

Kevin Grimm presented a paper titled "Knights and Narrators; Authors, Printers, and Readers" in a session devoted to Sir Thomas Malory at the 50th Annual Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

Ed Haworth Hoepfner was awarded the rank of Distinguished Faculty on Founder's Day.

Graeme Harper, Dean of the Honors College, appeared on [Comcast Newsmakers](#) to discuss how Oakland University's Honors College, "one of the most established Honors Colleges in the nation," to discuss how OU's Honors College differentiates itself from other programs to provide an exceptional educational experience for its student scholars.

Niels Herold (pictured at left) was awarded Faculty Recognition for Research and Service on Founder's Day.



Faculty News

Jeff Insko's essay-review "Prospects for the Present" was published in *American Literary History*.

Kevin Laam presented "Monumental Logic and Laureate Ambition in 17th-Century English Lyric" at the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America in Berlin, Germany.

Peter Markus was interviewed in [The Brooklyn Rail](#). He also has an excerpt from his current work-in-progress in the [Iowa Review](#).

Peter Markus was awarded the University Excellence in Teaching Award.

L. Bailey McDaniel was named Educator of the Year at the Sunrise Pinnacle Awards Ceremony hosted at the Royal Park Hotel.

Alison Powell has been nominated for the 2015 PEN / Joyce Osterweil Award for Poetry. The Osterweil Award "recognizes the high literary character of the published work to date of a new and emerging American poet of any age and the promise of further literary achievement."

Alison Powell's Judd Award proposal was fully funded – and the most awarded to any applicant. Her proposal for an OU National Spoken Word Showcase promises to bring valuable recognition to the Creative Writing program.

The Undergraduate Programs Faculty was awarded the University Assessment Award (for a report written by **Kevin Laam** and accepted by Kathleen Pfeiffer, *pictured below*) on Founder's Day.



...But We've Been Busy!

Faculty Notes

Thoughts on the Kresge Arts Fellowship

By Kathleen Pfeiffer

June 28, 2012: I remember it well. I didn't sleep at all the night before; I'd wake at half hour intervals throughout the night, refresh the news feed on my iPad waiting for the press release, waiting for the news to become real.

When I learned a month earlier that I'd been named one of the 2012 Kresge Literary Arts Fellows, I'd been sworn to secrecy until the official announcement. The period of waiting was surreal – I met the other Fellows at an orientation session and photo shoot, and we all greeted each other with mutually bleary eyed elation. One of the Fellows, I remember, brought pies that day. For me, those days were particularly overwhelming because I was still reconciling myself to beginning a three year term as English Department chair – challenging enough in its own right. How could I possibly manage?

Flash forward to June 25, 2015, when I woke from a beautiful sleep to check my twitter feed and see that Jeff Chapman was named one of the 2015 Literary Arts Fellows. In many ways, I'm even happier for Jeff now than I was for myself then, because I know exactly what sort of year he has ahead -- I know, with clarity and certainty that eluded me in 2012, that Jeff's year will be extraordinary. The Kresge Fellowship brought me more treasures than I can fully explain, but a few of them are, like Jeff himself, closely connected to my life here in the English Department.

Through Kresge, I met Peter Markus, who has since become a colleague in our Creative Writing program and who won the Excellence in Teaching Award after only his first year here. Through Kresge, I began collaborating with Ali Woerner and Thayer Jonutz, the OU Dance faculty members who created Take Root Dance, and who have welcomed me into their creative life. Working together with Ali and Thayer, and with set design artwork provided by Andrea Eis and lighting by Kerro Knox III, we presented the interdisciplinary performance "Snapshots" in 2013 as part of Art X Detroit. We performed in Varner Hall here at OU and in the Kresge Courtyard of the DIA. And we're working together again

Faculty Notes

Kresge Arts Fellowship... *continued*

– our current collaboration is a two part series titled “Ink,” with Ali and Thayer’s choreography growing out of a memoir essay of mine. This time around, I’ve also come to meet and work with composer Jon Anderson from Wayne State University, an innovative musician who incorporates text, voice and sound into his extraordinary soundtracks.

Because of Kresge, and with encouragement from the professional development experts at Creative Capital, I created a website at www.kathywrites.com where I blog from time to time. This summer, as my chair term comes to a close, I am happier than I can say about the prospect of returning my fullest attention to my writing life. I am taking out the old tattered card that’s been tacked over my desk since 1991, when I first read Ernest Hemingway’s *The Garden of Eden*. This passage jumped out at me then, and I copied it onto a notecard that I’ve carried with me since. It returns to me now, offering hope and guidance for me, for Jeff Chapman, for any memoirist –

“There is nothing you can do except try to write it the way that it was. So you must write each day better than you possibly can and use the sorrow that you have now to make you know how the early sorrow came. And you must always remember the things you believed because if you know them they will be there in the writing and you won’t betray them. The writing is the only progress you make.”



Sam Paraventi/Minty Photography

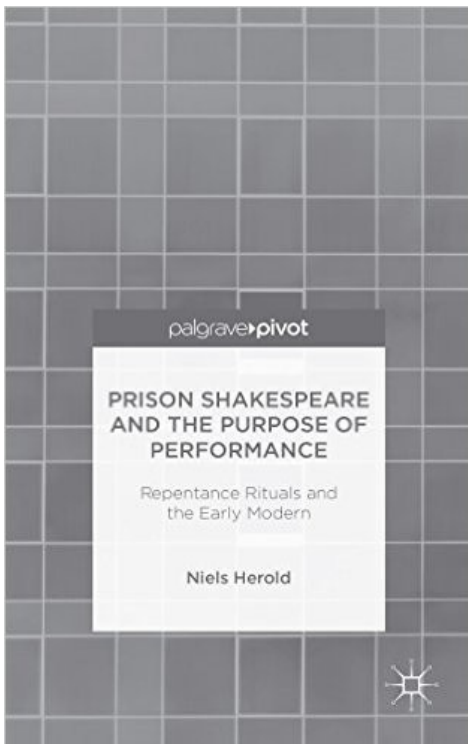
Faculty Notes

Niels Herold's book, [*Prison Shakespeare and the Purpose of Performance: Repentance Rituals and the Early Modern*](#), has received excellent reviews:

"In this powerful and powerfully moving book, Herold explores the fascinating process by which convicted criminals assume the roles of criminals and of victims in performances of Shakespeare's plays. Herold has much to teach us about the social function of Shakespeare's fascination with interiority, particularly the interiority of those who have been injured, and those who have hurt others. Herold explains in riveting detail how these inmates discover authentic repentance by playing a dramatic role. This is a book that should be read by all who prize the Humanities, and particularly by those who do not. As it reminds us of the genuinely healing powers of art, this lucid, inspiring book demonstrates afresh the astonishing human value of Shakespeare's dramatic texts and proclaims the untapped cultural resource of those our culture has incarcerated." - Michael Schoenfeldt, University of Michigan, USA

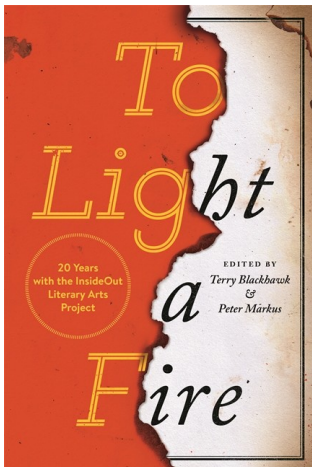
"Since 2007, Niels Herold has borne witness to SBB's rehearsal and performance process at the Luther Luckett Correctional Complex in LaGrange, Kentucky. Now comes this well-researched, thoughtful, and insightfully written book that offers outsiders an intricate look into the transformational power that art, theatre, and the works of Shakespeare have upon an incarcerated population." - Curt L. Tofteland, Founder, Shakespeare Behind Bars

"This book examines its subject matter - some plays of Shakespeare and their interest in the performance of forgiveness - at a fascinating intersection. The result is not only a moving and up-close look at Curt Tofteland's work but also an inspiring and telling account of quite how and why it is that Shakespearean drama is truly rehabilitative. Prison Shakespeare and the Purpose of Performance is of real importance to Shakespeare scholars, but also to all those interested in the humane and vital work of the arts in the prison complex." – Sarah Beckwith, Duke University

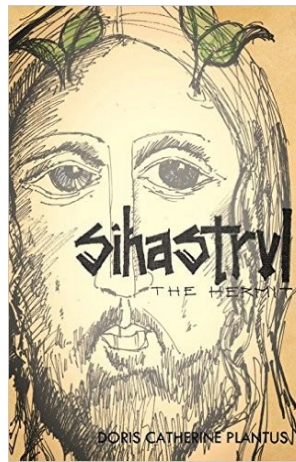


Faculty Notes

Peter Marcus's collaboration with Terry Blackhawk, [*To Light a Fire: 20 Years with the InsideOut Literary Arts Project*](#) (Edited by [Kresge Arts Fellow Terry Blackhawk](#) and Peter Markus), is a collection of essays in which poets and teachers "discuss how [iO's](#) creative magic happened during the course of their work in Detroit schools," allowing "students [to] find their own voices." OU Alum and Professor Emerita Toni S. Walters reviewed the collection: "Throughout *To Light a Fire*, adult and student writers reverberate as interchangeable mentors and mentees with emotional connections, heartfelt expressions, and emotional and provocative messages. Dr. Terry Blackhawk's vision for InsideOut and City Wide Poets, along with Peter Markus, writers-in-residence, teachers, and administrators, willingly nurture students' minds, hearts, and souls."



Doris Plantus's [*Sibastrul: The Hermit*](#) is "the first in a series that introduces the eponymous hero as an ambiguous character born under curious circumstances in a mysterious cave, but whose ultimate origins and destiny are determined by much larger forces. The story is divided into books and told from different points of view across the timeless expanse from the very beginning of the world, to present day. It is structured as a collection of apocryphal works (from Greek word apocryphos, meaning obscure, to hide away), whose themes offer a sense of innocents, if quirky, ingenuity with which to re-imagine the history of the world."



What's Cued Up...

I'm watching [Wolf Hall on PBS](#).
Rachel Smydra

I'm watching [The Office \(U.S.\)](#).
Kevin Laam

In Memoriam

Jim McClure: “When Death Takes a Colleague”

by Doris Plantus

I met Jimmy McClure twice. The first time I was an undergrad at university, though I never studied with him. The second time was as a colleague, when I was hired as a Visiting Professor. He was an affable man, with a clear, articulate speech. A broad smile, had he, and he carried his briefcase like a fellow who knew the rigors of grammar, but also the whimsical, wry, spaces in-between. Jimmy could talk about anything, anytime, to anyone, without those pesky airs so common to English professors. In fact, Jimmy was pure oxygen.

When I really got to know him as a colleague and friend. He had a picture of Magritte's "The Man in the Bowler Hat" on his door. It drove me nuts. I used to want to see the man's face. I figured, though, that Jimmy had a reason for why he put it on his door. We never talked about that. We talked about school, and students, and how life was so different than when we were young like that. He used to tell me about his early life, and modest beginnings. He was a regular guy, the kind of guy who would have lived down the block from me—pleasant, unpretentious, helpful, polite. He wasn't aloof. He was highly intelligent and creative, but humble. I liked that about him. Seeing him on campus was like seeing him in the neighborhood. The last time that happened was at a lecture on Shakespeare.

We found some mutual relief in our respective rants about all things English, and all things life-wise, and in the end he said, "Now I'm just ramblin', as my dear mother used to say, like a man who just fell out of an airplane." It made me laugh. I know I will always remember that. That and the beard. The man who fell out of the airplane, the man with the beard, and the man in the bowler hat.

Then I got a note from the Chair saying that Jimmy had had a fatal heart attack the day before. It hit me like a drop in cabin pressure, like suddenly there was not enough oxygen to breathe. I felt like a woman who had fallen out of an airplane.

When Death takes a colleague, he takes away a little bit of anguish from our hearts and crumbles it around our feet like broken glass, so we are afraid to take a step; he takes a little bit of our confidence, and pride; but when Death takes a colleague, in his haste and greed, he also drops what he cannot carry: a word, a memory, a favorite line, a last smile. And these remain for us to gather and keep.

May your memory be eternal, Jimmy McClure.

In Celebration

Judd Family Achievement Award 2015: Jimmy McClure

Jimmy McClure worked unrelentingly to provide OU students with the very highest level of responsible, well-informed, creative teaching in writing and grammar. He left a legacy of a grateful legion of former students now teaching writing and grammar in local high schools, or writing for businesses and industries. His career with the English Department was remarkable, and he never stopped developing and researching and revising and supplementing his courses, which is also a notable achievement. I am very pleased that we recognize and celebrate these achievements by awarding the 2015 Judd Family English Department Faculty Achievement Award to Jimmy.

Jimmy wrote his Master's Project on a couple of plays by John Millington Synge under my direction and was then hired by Mark Workman to teach Business and Technical Writing and Advanced Composition in the OU English Department.

This gets me to where I can make clear the extent of Jimmy's achievement in his career and in his teaching. He reviewed all the available textbooks before teaching the course. He internalized all of the principles that he was finding in textbooks and teaching, and he developed his own materials. Except perhaps for the general shape of the course, since the succession of assignments in Business Writing courses is relatively standard, after three years his course had few or no traces of my course which had been its model. It was substantially improved.

Jimmy's professionalism, his dedication to the Department, and his sense of responsibility to his students all stood out. He was always learning, always surveying his fields and aware of the latest developments. At the same time, he never blindly embraced the faddish, and he knew better than to abandon what remains excellent even if old: I was always proud to be the colleague of someone who frequently taught from Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for Modern Students* (where "modern" is post-1965).

Jimmy's career and his courses were always dynamic, always in flux, always developing and being refined, and always works in progress, and consequently he was always achieving but never done with any of it. His death has put a premature period to this achievement, but it allows us to see it for the very fine thing that it is, and I am very happy and grateful for the opportunity recognize and honor Jimmy's career and his courses as the outstanding achievements that they are.

Brian Connery

Distinguished

January 21, 2015
Department of English
Oakland University

To Whom It May Concern:

I am truly honored to write a letter of recommendation on behalf of Edward Haworth Hoepfner's advancement as a Distinguished Professor of English at Oakland University. I have known Professor Hoepfner since the late 1980s when I was embarking on my PhD program in OU's Reading and Language Arts Department and also beginning to write poetry. Because of my love of literature and creative writing, I chose to minor in English and took several of his courses including an independent study.

Working with Dr. Hoepfner was a delight. He is kind and witty, as well as intellectually stimulating, in person and in front of a class. He knows how to adjust his instruction to engage each student at an appropriate but challenging level. I have sat in on his undergraduate classes and participated in his graduate seminars and have been impressed by his passion for his subject and for his students. His perspective as a literary critic and his artistic sensitivities as a poet bring great depth to his role as a professor.

One is unfailingly impressed by Ed Hoepfner's humility as well as his sense of humor. He is a noted scholar and literary critic, thanks to his work on the poetry of W.S. Merwin and John Ashbery, two of today's most revered and challenging poets; and his own poetry has received major nominations and important awards. He has also mentored many OU poets, including Molly Brodak, who received the prestigious Iowa Poetry Prize in 2009. I am pleased to count myself among Ed's "poetry mentees" and remain deeply grateful for his advice and inspiration. His advice was also invaluable when he served on the committee for my dissertation, "Talking Back with the Text" – an exploration into the composing processes of teenaged poets.

This investigation informed my classroom teaching in Detroit and led to the formation of InsideOut Literary Arts Project (iO), which I founded

Faculty

in 1995, shortly after receiving my PhD. I'm proud that iO has become one of Detroit's major youth arts organizations in its twenty-year history, with service to well over 50,000 students. My growth as a poet took off after the years when I worked with Ed, and I now have four full-length collections of poetry to my credit and several awards, including a 2013 Kresge Arts in Detroit Literary Fellowship. I was also honored to receive an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities from Oakland University in April 2014. My relationship with Oakland University has been multifaceted and fruitful, and I count my friendship with Professor Hoeppe as one of the most satisfying influences of all.

Ed Hoeppe is beloved in the local writing community for his kindness and skill as a poet and teacher, but perhaps his most lasting contribution is helping to promote the English Department's Creative Writing Major. He nearly single-handedly researched and wrote the proposal for a program intended to add depth to the Department's offerings and bridge it to the larger community. Already iO writers have worked with OU students, and conversation is underway about OU Creative Writing students gaining experience working in iO classrooms. The burgeoning field of Creative Writing programs in this country shows no signs of abating and is contributing widely to the common good. It's good that Oakland University will have a presence in this arena. Ed Hoeppe's many contributions, his diligence, intellectual depth, and talents as a poet are all worthy of recognition as a Distinguished Professor of English. Thank you so much for taking my remarks into consideration.

Sincerely,
Terry M. Blackhawk, PhD
Founding Director
InsideOut Literary Arts Project



Professor & Poet

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Our [Website](#)

