

Rhymes & Reasons

A Newsletter of the Mississippi State University

Vol 2. No. 3

Department of English

January 2012

We would like to introduce you to...

The Department of English proudly introduces you to our excellent new faculty and teaching assistants:

Dr. Lyn Fogle (on right) holds a PhD in linguistics from Georgetown University and an MA in TESOL from American University. You met Lyn last year as a visiting professor; she returns this year in a tenure-track position to teach introduction to linguistics as well courses in syntax, second-language acquisition, and TESOL. Dr. Fogle's research, focused on second-language acquisition, informs all her teaching.



Just before moving to Starkville last summer, **Dr. Wendy Herd** (on left) completed her PhD in linguistics at the University of Kansas. Dr. Herd's conducts her research at the intersections of psychology, phonemes, and regional dialects. With her colleagues Dr. Lyn Fogle and Dr. Ginger Pizer, Dr. Herd recruits students for our TESOL Certificate program and teaches the full range of our courses in linguistics.



Dr. Andrea Spain (left) earned her PhD in comparative literature in 2009 at the State University of New York at Buffalo. After serving for one year as a visiting professor at Western Illinois University, Dr. Spain accepted a tenure-track position in our department. Her scholarship explores issues of gender and politics in postcolonial literatures, work that shapes her teaching in world literature survey, in Critical Writing and Research, as well as in advanced courses and seminars in postcolonial literatures.

Thanks to the recruiting efforts of Dr. Kelly Marsh, Dr. Tommy Anderson, and Dr. Lara Dodds, our MA program has attracted excellent **students**. Our newest **Teaching Assistants** are pictured below, all are pictured on page 8.



Front Row, from left: Tia Stubbs, Kiley Sullivan, Charlyn Watson, Caroline Baker, Jordan Lashley
Back Row, from left: Susan Clayton, Josh Parsons, Cory Lockhart, Kirk Cochran, Taylor Garner



The Big Move: From Exile to the Promised Land

Two years ago, Lee Hall’s Bettersworth Auditorium received extensive renovation. Though the auditorium now has larger, more comfortable seats than it had 100 years ago, the two-balcony facility has otherwise returned to its 1910 splendor.

Then in the fall semester of 2011, Provost Jerry Gilbert announced that the rest of Lee Hall, at long last, will receive a major renovation, a \$21M project that will take 18 months to complete. The architects, Dale Partners of Jackson, have drawn plans that will preserve the grand, early twentieth-century style in all entry ways and hallways, featuring lofty ceilings, handsome moldings, and ornate light fixtures, all in keeping with the auditorium. In contrast, faculty

offices and classrooms will sport state-of-the art furnishings and electronics.

By the spring semester of 2014, our department will move back to an elegant Lee Hall; we will occupy the entire second floor, with the President’s offices on the fourth floor, the offices of the Provost and Research on the third floor, and the Department



(Left) Modern electronics clash with antiquated heating and obtrusive pipes in Lee Hall 210. (Above) A few minutes before class time in Lee 208. (Near right) Crepe myrtle outside Lee Hall in the fall. (Far right) The Writing Center in Lee Hall.



Howell Hall

of Classic and Modern Languages and Literature on the first floor. The ground floor will house three large wired classrooms as well a staff lounge and areas for electrical and mechanical maintenance.

Before we return to the Lee Promised Land, we will experience a three-semester exile in Howell Hall, a 1940s-vintage building that will one day receive its own renovation and become part of the School of Art, Architecture and Design.

Our trek to Howell will begin at the end of the spring 2012 semester, when our department—as well as the Department of Classic and Modern Languages and Literatures, the Dean of Students, the Vice President for Student Affairs, and all other occupants—must vacate our marvelous but dilapidated Lee Hall. While we won't miss its leaky plumbing and peeling paint, we will surely miss our Place.

By the fall semester of 2012, then, Howell will house both our department and Languages. Our department includes 23 professors, 11 instructors, 22 lecturers, 21 teaching assistants, and two secretaries; Languages has nearly half that many folks. As a result, most professors and instructors will find themselves with an office-mate. Further, most of our

lecturers and TAs will also work from Howell, but the lack of office space will mean that they will do their electronic work in a computer lab and their conferring with students in large rooms dedicated to this purpose.

Additionally, our Writing Center will move to the Harpole House on President's Circle, near Allen Hall. This comfortable home will meet the needs of our booming Writing Center; it will also house Sarah Sneed, the director, as well as several instructors. Eventually, the Provost wants to move our Writing Center to the new classroom building currently on the drawing board.

So we will be inconvenienced and crowded. But, in good Faulknerian fashion, we will not only “endure” but “prevail” over the displacement, knowing that by 2014 we will return to our beloved Lee Hall—and that we'll be in much better shape after all the walking from Howell to our classes off the Drill Field, near Lee Hall, our Center.

Rich Raymond
Department Head



Faculty Publications and Awards

Dr. Tommy Anderson received the Dean's Eminent Scholar Award as well as a Harp Grant to support his work at the Folger Library on his next book. Dr. Anderson also published (with Scott Crossley) "Rue with a Difference: A Stylistic Analysis of the Rhetoric of Suicide in Hamlet"; *College Literature* will soon publish his article on Titus Andronicus.

Dr. Ted Atkinson brought three essays to print: "Hellhound on His Trail: Faulknerian Blood-guilt and the Traumatized Form of Lewis Nordan's Wolf Whistle in *Southern Literary Journal*"; "The Impenetrable Lightness of Being: Miscegenation Imagery and the Anxiety of Whiteness in *Go Down Moses*" in *Faulkner and the Returns of the Text*; and "Cultural Context: *Absalom, Absalom!*" in *Critical Insights*.

The journal *Short Story* will soon publish **Dr. Greg Bentley's** "A Journey into the Bizarre/Bazaar: Time and Subjectivity in James Joyce's 'Araby.'" Dr. Bentley also continues his book projects on modern fiction and on Renaissance drama.

Dr. Shalyn Claggett published three articles: "George Eliot's Interrogation of Physiological Future Knowledge" in *Studies in English Literature*; "Victorian Pros and Poetry: Science as Literature in William Acton's *Prostitution*" in *Prose Studies*; and "Putting Character First: The Narrative Construction of Innate Identity in Phrenological Texts" in *Victorian Institute Journal*.

Dr. Pat Creevy applied for a fall-2012 sabbatical to complete his book on the poetry of William Wordsworth.

Dr. Peter DeGabriele published "Intimacy, Survival, and Resistance: Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*" in *English Literary History*. With an article forthcoming on Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, he also continues his book project on *Sovereign and Witness: Literature, Epistemology, and the Political in Eighteenth Century England*.

The journal *English Literary Renaissance* published **Dr. Lara Dodds'** article on "Reading and Writing in Sociable Letters; or How Margaret Cavendish Read her Plutarch." She also presented papers at the Biennial Conference on John Milton, the Biennial Conference on Margaret Cavendish, and MLA.

Dr. Lyn Fogle presented papers at Columbia University, at the International Symposium on Bilingualism in Oslo, and at the American Association of Applied Linguistics in Chicago. She also has three articles and a book accepted for publication.

Becky Hagenston's story "Stones" appeared in Alaska Quarterly Review. Also, her story "The Afterlife" was named runner-up for the Tobias Wolff Award for Fiction; it will appear soon in *The Bellingham Review*.

Titled "'He said'; 'She said'; 'We Said': Cultural Memory and African American Literary Pedagogy," **Dr. Shirley Han-shaw's** essay appeared as the lead chapter in *Sites of Memory in the African Diaspora Experience*.

Dr. Wendy Herd published "Acoustics and Perception of Emphasis in Urban Jordanian Arabic" in *Journal of Phonetics*.

Dr. Holly Johnson applied for a fall-2012 sabbatical to pursue her new book project, a critical edition and translation of Robert Rypon's Latin sermons. Dr. Johnson's book on *The Grammar of Good Friday: Macaronic Sermons of Late Medieval England* will soon reach print.

Press 53 published **Dr. Michael Kardos'** collection of stories, *One Last Good Time*; the press also reprinted his story "The Castle of Horrors" in *Surreal South*. Additionally, Dr. Kardos published "Get Your Story Published" in *Writer's Digest* and "Writing the Jersey Shore in the Age of Reality TV" in the online journal *The Millions*, and his novel *Three-Day Affair* will come out soon.

Dr. Matt Little has an article on Edward Lear forthcoming in *The Explicator*.

Nominated for the Pushcart Prize, **Dr. Richard Lyons** published six poems, two in *The Gettysburg Review*, two in *Crab Orchard Review*, one in *Cimmaron Review*, and one in *The Cincinnati Review*. He also had four poems accepted for publication.

Dr. Kelly Marsh has an article forthcoming in *Tulsa Studies*. She also presented a paper on Capote's work at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association, and another on *The God of Small Things* at the International Conference on Narrative.

Dr. Tennyson O'Donnell continues his work on Hawaiian discourse and on rhetorical strategies for teaching literature and for teaching student writers one-on-one.

The prestigious journal *PMLA* published **Dr. Bonnie O'Neill's** "The Personal Public Sphere of Whitman's 1840s Journalism." She also pursued her book project on literary celebrity.

Peter Olson presented an essay on "Edward Albee's Great Society: The Post-War Program to Demystify the American Dream" at the Regional Graduate Student Conference at the University of North Alabama.

The prestigious volume *Best American Poetry 2011* printed **Dr. Catherine Pierce's** "Postcards from Her Alternate Lives." Dr. Pierce placed 18 additional poems in both print and online venues, including *FIELD 85*, *The Paris Review*, *diode*, *Copper Nickel*, *The Cincinnati Review*, and *Blackbird*.

In Their Own Words: On Being an English Major

(Dr. Tommy Anderson's fourth installment in a series of profiles of our English graduates.)

As the department's Director of Undergraduate Advising, I often have students and parents ask me what an English major can do when they graduate; I'm sure they expect a response about law school, graduate research in English, or teaching. And to be sure, many of our best majors over the years are practicing lawyers and teachers. Angela (Taylor) Brewer's experience at Mississippi State tells a different story. After immersing herself in British and American literature for four years, winning the Peyton Williams Award for student writing, and graduating summa cum laude with a BA in English in 2002, Angela integrated her passion for humanities with a new interest in scientific inquiry—specifically geological science. In her current job as a textbook editor for a major publisher, Angela is both a scientist and literary critic on a daily basis. Her experience as a student of English at MSU speaks to the flexibility of our major and to the value of the skills honed while reading and writing about great books.

When I was getting ready to graduate high school and choosing a college major, I wasn't sure what I wanted to be when I grew up. I thought about being a teacher, a lawyer, a judge, a writer, a doctor, and even president of the United States. I knew that no matter what path I chose, starting as an English major would provide me with a strong foundation because it would help me become a better writer, a better reader—a better communicator. But when I started as an English major at Mississippi State University, I didn't expect to love it as much as I did. I have many fond memories of the years I spent in Lee Hall.

As an English major, I also worked at The Reflector for three semesters—first as a copy editor, then as the opinion editor, and then as the managing editor. And then, the course of my education

changed. I signed up for an introductory geology course because I thought it would be easy, and the lab wasn't required with the class. But the joke was on me! I had to work harder in that class than in any other science class I had taken, and I relished every minute of it. The professor had energy and enthusiasm that sucked me in. So, after I finished my English degree, I moved on to the Department of Geosciences to work on my master's degree under the guidance of Dr. Leo Lynch.

Staying at MSU was a no-brainer for me. I loved the university and Starkville (and I still miss it, almost 7 years later). My English professors, especially my undergraduate advisor, Dr. Kelly



Angela Brewer and family

Marsh, were incredibly supportive of me moving from English to geology. Dr. Marsh was always interested in hearing about what I was working on and how I was still using my English degree in a scientific field.

The reading and research skills I developed as an English major were invaluable to me in grad school, and they set me apart from my fellow grad students. Research requires the ability to read critically and evaluate material and sources for relevance and reliability, whether you are researching information for school, for a job, or for a hobby. The same goes for presenting information, whether you are communicating with peers, colleagues, professors, or potential employers.

After I got my B.A. in English and my M.S. in geology, I moved to Columbus, Ohio, where I

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In Their Own Words

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managed a couple of soil testing laboratories for engineering consulting companies. These jobs were not what I expected to do after graduating with English and geology degrees—I thought I would be a technical writer—but they were great learning experiences. At the time, the lab work was different and interesting, and it was similar to the lab work I did for my thesis. But I eventually realized how much I missed reading and writing on a regular basis. So, in 2008, I got a job as an editor for a major textbook publisher.

In my current position, I edit middle school science textbooks. Whenever I tell someone what I do, I add, “It’s more fun than it sounds!” People (including my parents, I think) usually assume that I sit and read textbooks all day, every day. But there is so much more involved than that! When I started, I coordinated Earth science content for a number of chapters, correlated Earth science content to educational standards, managed freelance authors and editors, edited chapters, and selected art and photographs that would accompany the text, among other things. Now, I work on customizing textbooks for specific states and updating content for new editions. I think about the standard job interview question, “Where do you see yourself in 5 years?” and my answer would be, “Right here.” The job is challenging, sometimes demanding, and a lot of fun! It’s the perfect job for me because it allows me to use my English and geology degrees.

Not only did my time as an English major help me develop research skills and an ability to read critically, but I also can write for a variety of audiences. Having the ability to write a resumé and cover letter or professional letters (or emails) has allowed me to present myself as a professional as I searched for a job in an increasingly competitive job market and as a representative of a large, diverse, international company.

Being an English major was an excellent start to my career. My professors taught me to read critically for information, and having so many different professors with different styles made me a more flexible writer. As a student, I went from writing prose and literary analyses to writing technical papers and the occasional newspaper article. And now I edit and sometimes write about Earth science

for sixth- to eighth-graders. The skills I developed as an English major helped me in my educational pursuits and in my current position, where I have to communicate specific information to a specific audience in a limited space.

Communication styles, writing skills, and learning techniques change with technology, and the flexibility I gained from my years as an English major has helped me adapt to these changes as they relate to my job. Especially now that young people are growing up typing more than writing and texting instead of talking, being able to write well and speak well will help take you farther in your education and your career. Starting your education as an English major will give you a strong foundation, no matter what your goal is.



Faculty Publications and Awards

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Dr. Ginger Pizer’s article on “Child-Directed Signing as a Linguistic Register” appeared as a chapter in *Formational Units in Sign Languages*.

Information Age Press published **Dr. Rich Raymond’s** book on *Readings in Writing Courses: Re-placing Literature in Composition*. He also won a Fulbright Scholarship for the spring-2012 semester, when he will teach and write at the University of Pristina, Kosovo.

Dr. Donald Shaffer presented a paper at the College English Association. This paper connects with his on-going work on Chesnut and Richard Wright.

Dr. Andrea Spain presented her essay on “Razorwire and Bodies of the State: the South African Mirror and Global Apartheid” at Western Illinois University. She also continues her book project on the intersection of postcolonial literature and politics.

Dr. Robert West published *Convalescent*, a book of poems, with Finishing Line Press. He also took a sabbatical in the fall 2011 semester to pursue his edition of the works of A. R. Ammons.

Kudos for Our Students

Seniors **Kathryn Hope Long** and **Jessica Porter** and MA Senior **Leslie Joblin** and MA student **Kiley Sullivan** won the **Howell H. Gwin Memorial Scholarship**.

Junior **Elise Boone** and senior **Kelsey Norris** won the **William H. Magruder Scholarship**.

MA student **Jannell McConnell** won the **Eugene Butler Creative Writing Award**.

Hannah Rogers received the **Peyton Ward Williams Distinguished Writing Award**, and **Leslie Joblin** received honorable mention.

Seniors **Victoria Mayhall** and **Hannah Rogers** won the **Helen W. Skelton Scholarship**.

Elise Boone, seniors **Cristyn Cade Holder**, **Victoria Mayhall**, **Kelsey Norris**, **Hannah Rogers**, **Sarah McCain**, and sophomore **Kristen Spink** won the **Roger LeMoyne Dabbs Memorial Scholarship**.

Graduate students **Jannell McConnell**, **Jessica Temple**, and **Lisa McMurtray** presented papers at the Conference on Intersections of Literature, Technology, and Science at Western Illinois University.

Chris Ellzey won the Arts & Sciences Undergraduate Research Award for "Immigrant Perspectives of Life and Language Acquisition in Rural Mississippi."

Kelsey Norris received a 2011 Summer Research Award at the University of Illinois.

Marianna Prather won first prize in the Gender Studies Essay Contest for "Traffic in Women and Fruit: Sexual Control in Christina Rossetti's 'Goblin Market.'"

Ann Hamilton McGuire was selected for an editorial internship at Mississippi Magazine.

Laura Craig accepted a job with the Republican National Committee as a college representative/recruiter.

Myles Cryer received a teaching assistantship in Auburn's MA program in Professional Writing.

Ben Floyd enrolled in seminary to pursue a degree in marriage and family therapy.

Kathryn Long and **Kendra Martin** are pursuing Alternate Route to Teaching programs in Mississippi and Texas respectively.

Jessica Porter received a teaching assistantship in the MA program at the University of Alabama.

Marianna Prather pursues her MA in public policy at the Stennis Institute.

Ralph Taylor has taken a position as chef-intern at the Greenbriar Hills Country Club in St. Louis, Missouri.

Daniel Wynn accepted an internship with Congressman Nunnelee in Washington, DC.

Carina Lewis has been accepted into the Ole Miss law school.

Josh Doty, BA 2008, received his MA in English from Auburn. In the fall, he will begin the PhD program in English at UNC Chapel Hill.

Rachael Burnett teaches sixth-grade English at Briarcrest School.

JoAnna Suzzette Walker received a scholarship from the National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation.



And here are all our 2011-2012 Graduate Teaching Assistants:



Front (kneeling): Neil Barrett, Anna Bedsole, Alisha Street, Jessica Temple
Middle: Tia Stubbs, Kiley Sullivan, Charlyn Watson, Caroline Baker, Jordan Lashley, Jannell McConnell, Lisa McMurtray, Natalie Nations
Back: Susan Clayton, Jonathan Smith, Josh Parsons, Cory Lockhart, Kirk Cochran, Taylor Garner
Not Pictured: Hallie Gladstone

Thank You to our Alumni

Over the past seven years, our generous alumni and friends have donated over \$23,000 for the English Advancement Fund, which helps to support the travel and equipment needs of faculty and graduate students; they have also made handsome contributions to our scholarship funds. Most recently, Ms. Evelyn Beamon and Ms. Helen M. Messer provided a combined \$30,000 to fund the Dr. Richard Patteson Endowed Scholarship, in honor of our dear friend and colleague, who passed away on June 20, 2010. We will begin awarding this scholarship in the fall semester of 2012.

Of course, our needs continue to grow. In addition to supporting our writing contests, we need further support for scholarships, for

faculty travel, and for departmental equipment, especially for our Writing Center.

If you're interested in making a tax-deductible donation to help us to meet these needs, please contact Alex McIntosh, Director of Development for the College of Arts & Sciences at MSU. You can reach Mr. McIntosh at 662-325-2646, or at amcintosh@foundation.msstate.edu. You may also click on "opportunities for donors" on our departmental website: <http://www.msstate.edu/dept/english>.

Newsletter content by Dr. Rich Raymond,
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